FERRETS IN CALIFORNIA: A SPECIAL REPORT

modern FERRET™

THE FERRET LIFESTYLE MAGAZINE

For ferret owners. By ferret owners.™

#8

- FERRETS AND DOGS
- SETTING UP A SHELTER
- HOLIDAY DANGERS

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welcome

to issue #8

of the magazine that celebrates ferrets

Minding Your Own Business™

Mary and Ralph

One of *Modern Ferret's* most important goals is to promote responsible ferret ownership. We want our readers to have correct, up-to-date information about their pets. That means we encourage all ferret owners to read current books, watch current videos, join clubs, and keep in touch with one another (and, of course, read *Modern Ferret*).

Sometimes being a responsible pet owner means not getting a pet in the first place. Sometimes the timing or circumstances are just not right for bringing a pet (ferret or otherwise) into your family. Cynthiana Hoppel, a reader in Indiana, sent us a June 1996 article that illustrates this concept particularly well. It seems that a couple bought a ferret as pet for their two daughters. This would be fine except that the children were only 6 months and 1-1/2 years old. The ferret bit the younger child and the parents returned the ferret to the pet store. The article didn't report the particulars of the actual bite incident (that is, what type of supervision was involved and what the child or the ferret was doing prior to the bite). The child underwent a series of shots as a precaution.

What I don't understand is why a responsible parent would buy any live animal for such young children. The only appropriate pet for children that age is a stuffed animal. Ultimately, it is the parents' responsibility to protect their children from harm and offer only appropriate "playthings" for their children. If they choose to become pet owners, it is their responsibility as adults and parents to learn about the animal before they bring it home. Had these people owned a ferret previously, they would have had some knowledge of the natural play behavior of young ferrets and would known that child-ferret interaction requires undivided parental attention.

This is how ferrets get an undeserved bad reputation. What can you do to help? If you do not yet own a ferret, please think about what your home life is like and what it will be like over the next five to ten years. If you have any reason to think you will not be able to properly care for and supervise your ferret, don't get one. If you have very young children and want to get them a pet, go get a Gund™. If you already have ferrets, remember your responsibility to the safety of your pets and children.

Have a happy, healthy, and safe Holiday Season from Eric, The Ferrets & me.

- Mary

The Modern Staff:

Mary Shefferman - Editor-in-Chief
Eric Shefferman - Designer
- being fuzzy -
Sabrina
Ralph
Marshmallow
Knuks
Rest in peace... Barnaby
- also helping -
Dr. Bruce Williams - Medical Editor
Ted Schiffman - Photography Editor

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All offers/contests are void where prohibited, taxed, or otherwise frowned upon by the powers that be.

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Photo by Eric Shefferman
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Modern Ferret Vol. 2 No.2 1996 (ISSN 1080-6784) is published bimonthly by Crunchy Concepts Inc., PO Box 338, Massapequa Park, N.Y. 11762 USA.

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POSTMASTER: send address changes to *Modern Ferret*, PO Box 338, Massapequa Park, N.Y. 11762.

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The little number next to the "EXP:" is the number of the last issue of your subscription. This way you can tell when you're getting near the last issue of your subscription (horror!). The best way to ensure that you never miss an issue of *Modern Ferret* is to make sure that you renew your subscription in a timely manner.

Modern Ferret™

Vol. 2 No. 2

For ferret owners. By ferret owners.™

Contents:

It's a long road to California.
See page 18!

A dog's best friend?
See page 22!

Common dangers to ferrets during the holidays. Page 12.

BONG!

BING!

FEATURES:

10 About Us (the folks who make this thing)
11 CA Report: Ferrets Anonymous Lawsuit!
12 Holiday Dangers!
16 CA Report: The California Saga Continues
18 CA Report: Going to California
22 Ferrets and Dogs
28 Ferret Shelter Fundraiser
30 Gonzo's Story: Adrenal Recovery
34 Scaling Your Ferret's Teeth
39 Ferret Shelter in Florida
40 Starting a Ferret Shelter

DEPARTMENTS:

2 Minding Your Own Business™
3 Your Wacky Table of Contents! (You are here.)
4 Pink Noses™ Photo Contest Winners!
7 Reader Mail — Box 338!
8 The Ferret Directory™/Advertiser Index
14 Funny Ferret Tricks Contest Winners
31 Doctor to Doctor™ — Cystic Kidneys in the Ferret
37 Marshmallow Explains It All
43 Back Issue Index
44 Special Advertising Section
45 Contests! Contests! Contests!
46 Ferret Events Calendar
48 Ralph's Reviews
50 Ferretted Fairy-Tail™
52 Reader Art page!/Mission Statement

Pink Noses™

René Chartier and Mortimer
of South Amboy NJ

Squiggles and Wiggles chowin' breakfast.
Photo by Suni

Natasha going after Abby's banana!
Photo by Andy Goar of Boise ID

Photo of Mazzy by
Cheryl Lynn Gutierrez of San Antonio TX

Myrfie's first Christmas picture.
Photo by Christie & Amy

Homer checks out the centerfold of Issue #6!
By René Chartier of South Amboy NJ

Bear checkin' out the fridge!
By Rebecca Dice of Rock Glen PA

Gwenny, Scraper, and Ruby plotting some mischief!
Photo by Theresa & Vincent

Toot Toot (ferret) and Cody (dog) are great pals!
Photo by Bobbe Mathews of Galesburg MI

Sasha in a box!
By Sandie Miller of Philadelphia PA

Little Ricki is tuckered out!
Photo by Theresa & Vincent

The treat chain! Sassy, Pal, Ferris, Bo, and Dee.
In the background is Brandy the miniature pincher.
Photo by Curt and Jean Meyers

Symba (ferret) and Tygger are best friends!
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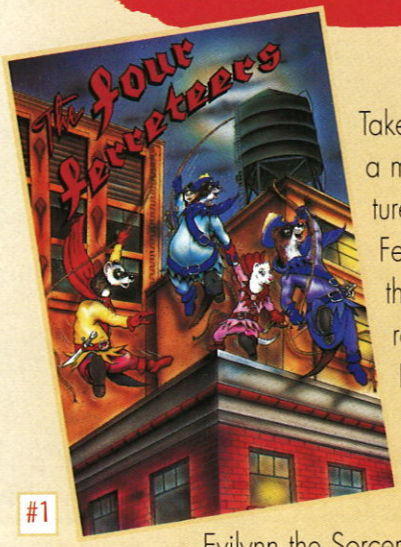

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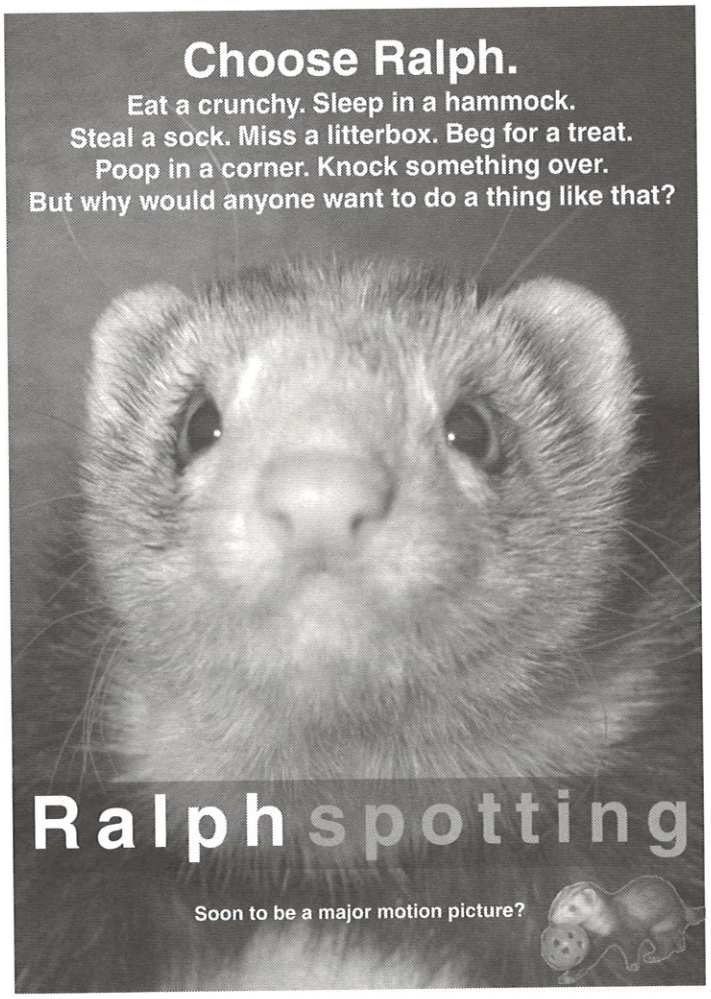
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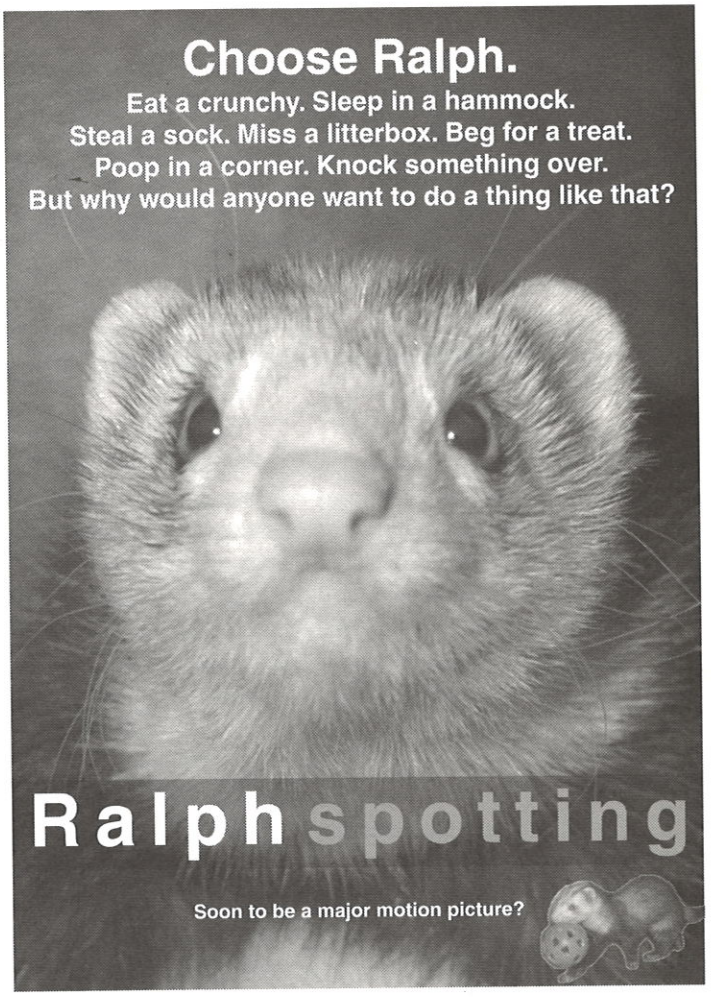
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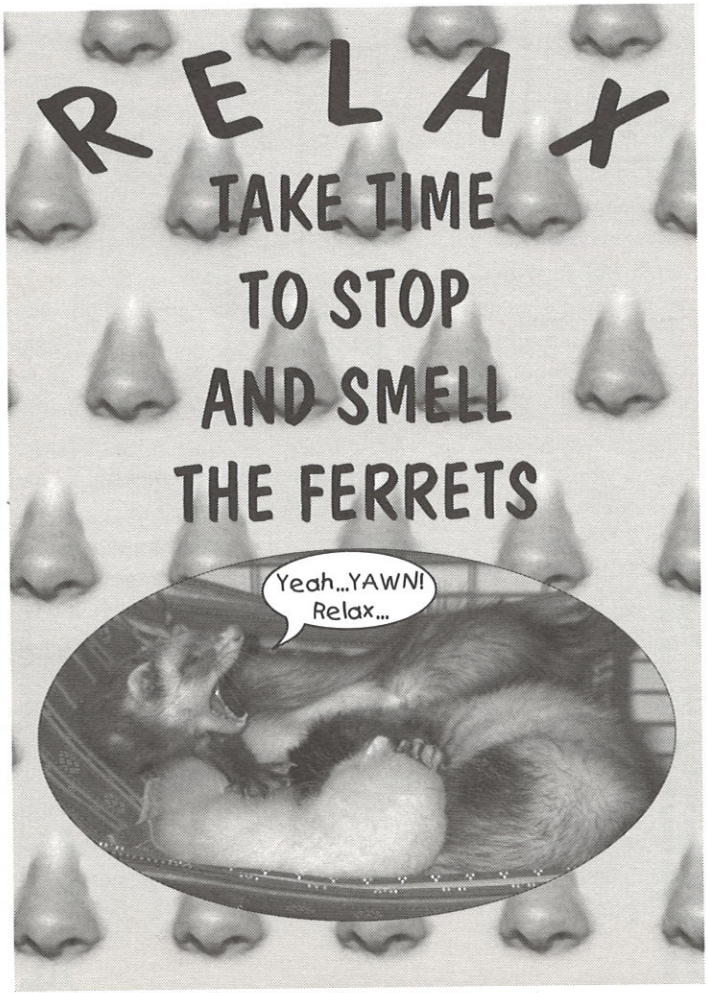

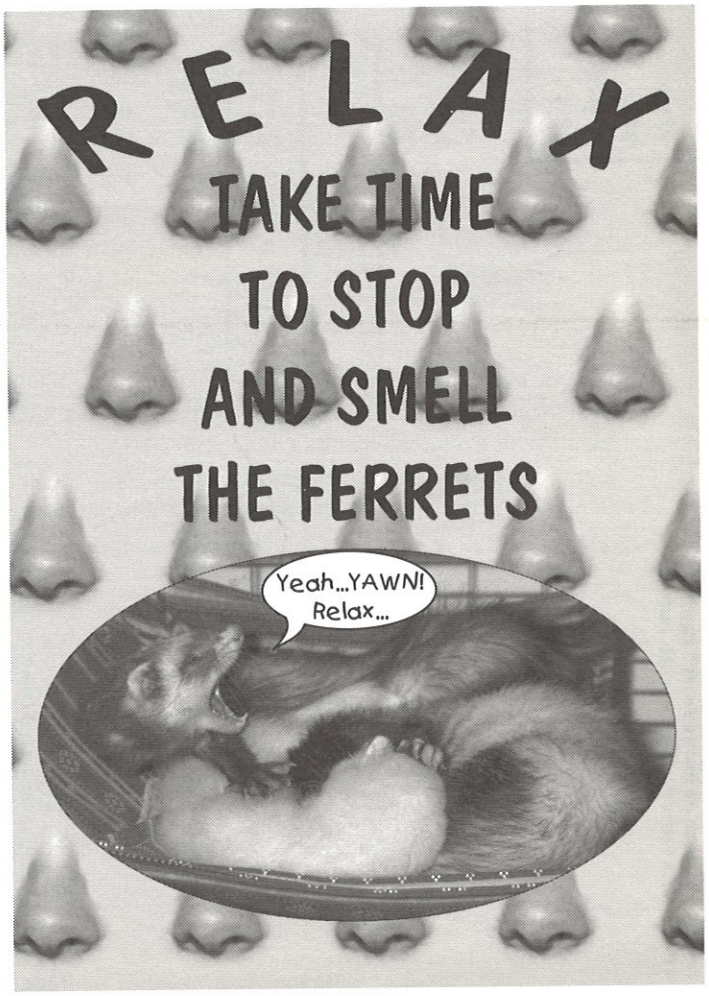

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Letters to *Modern Ferret*

Box 338 Logo designed by Jennifer Makower

Dear Modern Ferret:

Almost two years ago I went into a pet store to "shop" for a puppy, when I found a cage with a little ball of fur laying inside it. Upon asking the clerk what this critter was, I found out it was a baby ferret, about 10 weeks old. I was allowed to hold it, and from there it was all over. I only put him down to get my money out of my purse to pay for him. I named him "Timone" (I had just seen The Lion King the day before) and brought him from Ohio (where I was visiting relatives) to my home in Florida.

Timone had some problems, though. For one, he was blind (which I was unaware of when I bought him). I wish that was the least of it, but unfortunately he began having seizures. The first vet I took him to couldn't figure out what was wrong, and said he should be all right as long as there are no more seizures. Everything was fine for a couple weeks, until I came home from work and found him having another one. It broke my heart to see him like that, it couldn't have felt very pleasant to him, and I packed him up and went to another vet. After waiting for what seemed like an eternity, the vet came out and informed me that Timone had somehow contracted canine distemper. This was a mystery to me because he was never around any other animals (I was worried that another animal might seriously hurt him since he was blind), and I didn't even know that ferrets could get canine distemper. Needless to say, my only alternative was to have him put to sleep, which upset me very much. Then we brought him home and laid him to rest under a big shady tree in the backyard.

After obtaining a refund from the pet store, I used that money to buy another ferret (Weezer) from a friend who could no longer keep hers, and I also bought a book about ferrets (an owner's manual, you might call it). Since then, I have acquired Juniper & Baby from other friends who could no longer keep them, I have also been looking for other books about ferrets, but have been very disappointed. After what I went through with Timone, I am determined that the only visits these three ferrets will make to the vet will be good ones (check-ups and yearly shots), not because they're sick ...

Imagine my delight when I went to the pet store to buy food for the little weasels and saw *Modern Ferret* beckoning me from the shelf. I glanced through it briefly in the store, then bought it. When I got home I read it more thoroughly, and I must say I am much impressed. I was even more impressed when I read about your staff (I didn't think it was possible to publish a magazine with a staff of two or three people and a few ferrets — by the way, I know what you mean about these guys taking lousy phone messages).

***

... It is by far the best Weasel-Publication I have seen, and I give it TWO THUMBS UP (the three ferret-teers give it six paws up, and say hats off to Marshmallow, Knuks, and Ralph the Inspector!!!).

Keep up the excellent work!!!!

Sincerely,
Shannon Huntzinger, Weezer, Baby, and Juniper
Port Charlotte, FL

Editor's Note: Now is a good time to remind everyone how important it is to vaccinate your ferrets against canine distemper. Canine distemper is airborne (which means it's very contagious!) and it is always fatal in ferrets. A yearly vaccination is all it takes to prevent a tragedy. — Mary.

Dear Mary & Eric,

I've just finished reading issue #6 (twice) and I thought it was wonderful. For a small 'zine, it was informative and fun! Great job, guys!

Although we don't have any ferrets right now — I wouldn't be surprised it he brought one home — I enjoyed learning about them,. As a "Petland wife," it helps to be informed when people find out what your husband does. On more than a few occasions, they assume I know as much as my "manager man" himself.

It may help to have a small glossary in each 'zine. Not being a ferret owner, I didn't understand the concepts of "Dook," "Jill, " "Kits" & "Dance."

Thanks for being educational, imaginative and people oriented. where the other magazines seems cold and boring, *Modern Ferret* is much more playful.

Sincerely,
April M. Rivera
Bronx, NY

Editor's Note: Dook = the noise a ferret makes (a light chuckling sound when the ferret is excited); Jill = a whole female ferret; Kit = baby ferret; Dance = the Dance of Joy — you've got to see it to appreciate it! — Mary.

(more on the next page)

MORE BOX 338

Modern Ferret · PO Box 338 · Massapequa Park NY 11762

Dear Mary,

The Oregon Ferret Association (OFA) wishes to thank you for your donation of *Modern Ferret* Magazines, ferret mugs, and ear cleaning brochures for our 10th Annual Ferret Fun Match. The Fun Match grossed $1457.00 — almost double the amount raised last year! The Oregon Ferret Shelter was able to purchase 30 new cages to replace old or small cages in the shelter. Your generous donation assisted us in achieving this goal in addition to letting ferret owners become aware of *Modern Ferret*.

This past year has been a time of tremendous growth for our club. We've grown from 30 members in 1995 to almost 150 during 1996. Much of this growth can be attributed to our hard-working members who have been participating in monthly outreach programs with local pet stores to help the general public understand and appreciate our wonderful companion pets. Some of this growth is due to our presence on the World Wide Web. We now have members in a dozen states due to the exposure on the web. Please visit our web site at http://www.teleport.com/~leonard/ofa/ofa.html. Again, thank you for your support to help make the 1996 Fun Match a success and we hope we can count on your support next year.

Sincerely,
Christine J. Mathis
President, Oregon Ferret Association
Contact the OFA at: PO Box 90682, Portland OR 97290.

Editor's Note: We're glad to hear the fun match went well! Eric and I are always happy to help out in any way we can. — Mary.

To: ferrets@modernferret.com
Subject: Fantastic Job!!!

I have three ferrets, my brother has two. He introduced me to *Modern Ferret*. It's a great magazine! I have brought it to work to read and people stop to look at it. I think I have cleared up a lot of misconceptions about ferrets for them. A few of them are thinking of getting ferrets of their own now. It seems they just can't resist the Pink Noses pictures! I will be sending in my own contribution to Pink Noses soon. My youngest, Teddy, is a real cutie!!! Has the pinkest nose you ever saw! I consider them my babies ... people think I'm a little crazy though ... Hey, I would rather spend time with them than a lot of people I know ... OK most people I know! Keep up the good work. We appreciate it!

— Mary (the human in charge, I think) Gizmo, Nipper and Teddy

About the mail

As we are finishing off this issue (November 4, 1996) there are still some subscribers who have not received their copy of issue #7 — even though the magazines mailed out at the end of September. It is not that you have been forgotten, it is that the mail delivery for *Modern Ferret* has been extremely slow. There is not much we can do about this except be patient. Most of the copies do seem to get delivered, however, it takes the post office between 6 and 8 weeks to achieve this. In the meantime, most of you will see the magazine on the shelves in book stores or pet stores.

Until we can figure out some way to hook up our subscriptions database to some software that can barcode the address labels, there isn't much that will speed up the mailing. Since we have not qualified for periodicals class (formerly second class) mail, the mailing copies of *Modern Ferret* go via standard mail (formerly third class). This is the same way your "junk mail" gets delivered — and the same service.

At the same time, copies destined for stores ship directly to distributors who immediately break down and sort the shipment into packages for individual stores and re-distribute them. They operate under strict deadlines and move the magazines pretty efficiently. Thus, copies arrive very quickly at the stores.

Mail also can and does occasionally disappear. If you haven't gotten your subscription copy of issue #7 by the time you are reading this, please let us know and we'll replace it.

There's not much we can do at this point to make anything smoother until we can solve some of our other production problems. Please be patient with us — this has been very frustrating for us as well.

On another note, if you are moving, please **mail** us your change of address. Phone messages and e-mails are both very inefficient for us to process.

Thank you for your patience as we work to improve these situations.

The Ferret Directory™

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Advertising Index - Issue #8

32	Accupath
17	Animal Connection
20	Animals Alive
41	Critter Shop
24	Diamond Enterprises
41	Discount Master Animal Care
C2	Eight In One Pet Products Inc.
33	Expo USA
19	Ferret Calendar, The
29	Ferret Curiousity Shop
47	Ferret Fun Factory, The
C4	Four Paws Products Ltd.
25	Kritter Kages
31	L'Avian Pet Products
6	Little Paw Publishing
21	Mosaic Video
34	Parrots of the World
49	Performance Foods Inc.
C3	Sheppard and Greene
37	Something Productions
30	Stationery Ferret, The

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Minding Your Own Business™ Part II

About Us:

For those of you who didn't know: The word for a group of ferrets is a "business" of ferrets (just like a "flock" of seagulls)

Well, we're about 2 years into publishing *Modern Ferret*, so it's time to reveal a little about who we are and what we're doing.

The first major thing is that we're just two people and our ferrets taking on the entire task of producing a magazine. That's a lot of work — and a lot of different kinds of work. When we started, we were told it's impossible for two people to do a magazine entirely by themselves — but here at issue #8, it's safe to say that we are doing it (slightly behind schedule).

We started the magazine because we owned ferrets and were eager to learn more about them. We discovered that there were a lot of clubs and a lot of newsletters out there, but nothing colorful and fun like other animals had. Even scary looking reptiles (no offense to reptile lovers) had their own magazines. So we decided to change that.

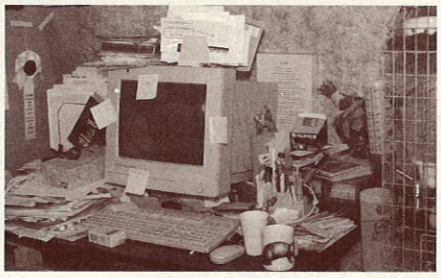
To keep the startup costs down, we've been living and working out of Eric's mother's house. Starting a business is always a struggle, and we had no idea how many ferret owners we could reach or how to reach them. We've had a lot of disappointments so far, but each issue still manages to come out better than the previous one.

Please bear in mind that with only two people, we can't return every call, letter, or e-mail. We try to do what we can, but we are neither a ferret breeder nor a veterinary referral.

The two of us (and our ferrets!) are very committed to producing the best magazine possible. Please pardon our continuing growing pains as we try to keep building the magazine.

— Mary, Eric, Sabrina, Ralph, Marshmallow, and Knuks

Eric's messy desk



Mary's messy desk

Fedex delivering our copies of Issue #7. So far we've spent most of our time complaining about the poor condition the boxes arrived in and that the printer shipped them via Fedex (WAY TOO EXPENSIVE). Time wasters like this make it hard to stick to a production schedule.

This issue's musical selections:
(for Eric to listen to while staying up late to finish the magazine layouts)
Green Day
- Dookie
Marshall Crenshaw
- Marshall Crenshaw
Ozzy Osbourne
- Blizzard of Oz
Men at Work
- Business as Usual
Ian Hunter
- All American Alien Boys
Billy Joel
- Turnstiles
The Boomtown Rats
- The Fine Art of Surfacing

The inspirational television lineup:
Without TV, we'd probably just go nuts! Our repeat favorites: Seinfeld, Cheers, Murphy Brown, I Dream of Jeanie, The Dick Van Dyke Show, Bob Newhart, Happy Days, Taxi, Rhoda, the Luci-Desi Comedy Hour, and Star Trek:Next Generation.
And new shows: NYPD Blue, Seinfeld, Friends, ER, and Deep Space Nine.

REVIEW of the UMAX Powerlook II:
We ordered a UMAX Powerlook II from MacMall to improve the quality of our photos. We received a big box that had obviously been opened and was missing the transparency scanner. After a whole day wasted on the phone arguing with both MacMall and UMAX, we ordered an AGFA Arcus II from a different company. So all of the better interior scans are from the AGFA (some of the early production was done with the old HP Scanjet IIcx). So much for UMAX. Stay tuned to see how the AGFA fares once we learn how to fine-tune it.

CALIFORNIA LEGALIZATION SPECIAL REPORT

Ferrets Anonymous Being Sued

Ferrets Anonymous (FA) and its chairman and founder, Pat Wright, are being sued as a result of a ferret bite incident that occurred in June of 1996. Also arising from the incident are several misdemeanor charges.

The lawsuit names Pat Wright, "Jane Doe" (the ferret's anonymous owner), and "... members, officers, or directors of FERRETS ANONYMOUS," as being responsible for the physical and emotional injury to a 13-year-old boy. It includes allegations of negligence, intentional infliction of emotional distress, endangering a child, and possession of a dangerous animal.

The complaint and other official papers contain common misinformation about ferrets. Because of California's ban on ferrets, it is commonly accepted by the health department that ferrets are considered "vicious and undomesticated animals." The complaint also states that there is no vaccine to prevent rabies in ferrets; it makes no mention of Imrab-3 (manufactured by Rhone-Merieux), which has been USDA-approved for use in ferrets for several years.

The Events

In June of 1996, Gabby, an albino ferret, escaped from her California home and was found by a neighbor (Lori). On June 18, Kyle, a friend of Lori's son, was nipped by Gabby while Lori was at work. FA rescuers were already on their way to pick up Gabby to return her to her owner, who had in the meantime contacted FA about Gabby's escape. The rescuers called Lori and told her that the ferret had bitten Kyle and that Kyle's grandmother had contacted Animal Control to pick up the ferret for routine rabies testing (which requires destroying the animal). The FA rescuers took the ferret. Gabby's owner maintains that Gabby had been vaccinated against rabies. However, since California does not recognize the USDA-approved rabies vaccine, the fact that the ferret was vaccinated was of little consequence.

Kyle's mother brought him to the emergency room where the doctor examined what he described as a slight puncture wound. The doctor advised that Kyle immediately begin a series of shots to prevent rabies because Kyle's mother said they did not know where the ferret was.

Kyle's mother insisted that Lori locate the ferret and turn it in to Animal Control so it could be tested for rabies. She threatened to sue Lori if she did not produce the ferret. Lori had told Animal Control that, as far as she knew, FA had the ferret. Animal Control then contacted FA to find out where Gabby was. Lori contacted Pat Wright saying that she was being threatened with a lawsuit and was being charged for not producing the ferret. She said that if the ferret was turned in, the charges would be dropped and she would not be sued. Kyle's mother also threatened to sue Pat and FA.

Animal Control contacted Pat and asked him to turn in the ferret. He said he would turn in the ferret provided that the ferret be quarantined, then sent to an Arizona shelter rather than killed and tested. He told them it was highly unlikely that the ferret had rabies. When they finally agreed to do so, Pat turned over the ferret on June 27. To maintain the anonymity of Gabby's owner as guaranteed by FA, Pat claimed ownership of Gabby. At that point, he was charged with several misdemeanor offenses, even though Gabby was in the hands of Animal Control before the deadline.

In addition, Kyle's mother continued to threaten to sue for damages. Both Pat and Lori were told that homeowner's insurance would cover the amounts Kyle's mother was seeking and if payment was made in this manner, a lawsuit could be avoided. Pat felt that was an inappropriate way to settle matter. FA's attorney suggested that the threat to sue was a bluff to get FA to settle out of court. Kyle's mother went ahead with a lawsuit claiming several thousand dollars in damages for Kyle's injury from Pat, FA, and Gabby's owner. FA's attorney has called the lawsuit "borderline frivolous."

Pat and FA plan to plead not guilty to the charges against them.

New Information

Pat contacted the other boys who were present when Kyle was nipped by Gabby. They said that Gabby had nipped at Kyle, but that she did not break the skin and there was no blood. They added that Kyle's cats had bitten him and that the "slight puncture wound" that the doctor examined may have been from one of his cats and not the ferret. Since the wound has long since healed, they are hoping that there are photos of the bite that will help prove that it was not in fact a ferret bite.

"I think their lawyer will tell them that they have no case. I'd love to be a fly on the wall when they say that," said Pat.

With this new evidence coming to light, Pat and FA are hopeful that the charges against them will be dropped. They are considering a counter-lawsuit if it appears that Kyle's mother made a fraudulent claim regarding the bite simply to collect money.

Legal fees are mounting. "I think we paid more for the lawyer than it would have cost to pay off [Kyle's mother]," says Pat. They have raised $3,500 for the FA legal fund, but that does not cover all of the expected legal costs of this case.

For more information on the lawsuit or to offer help or donations to the legal fund, contact:

Ferrets Anonymous
PO Box 3395
San Diego, CA 92163
or call/fax 619-584-8427 or e-mail legalin95@aol.com.

HOLIDAY DANGERS!

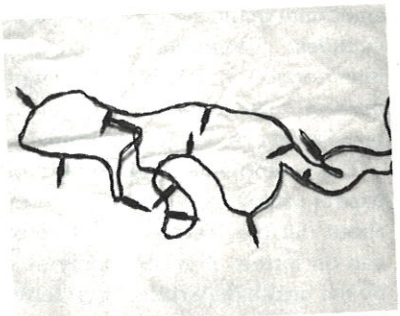
The holidays are a time for parties and fun. They can also be a time of potential disasters. Decorations, foods, and careless guests present special ferret-proofing challenges. Here are some tips to help you make your holidays safe for you and your fuzzies.

Don't throw out that box — until you make sure no ferrets are in it!

Don't step on the wrapping paper until you're sure there's no ferret under it!

Alcohol is a strict no-no!

Decorations could become dangerous chewables!



Watch out for electrical wires that might get chewed on!

Hazard #1: People

Everyone loves to look at and touch little fuzzies (well, except for Grandma who thinks they're rats). But your ferrets might not like all that attention from a bunch of strangers. When you have company for the holidays, keep your ferret cage in a secure room with the door closed. You can always take your guests in to visit with the ferrets. Be especially careful of youngsters who are not used to handling ferrets. Young children in particular can treat animals roughly, especially if they have no pets in their own homes. Make it clear to children and adults visiting your home that they should not handle the ferrets unless you or a responsible family member is there to supervise.

Always do a nose count before you throw out the trash. If your guests were all ferret folks and you allowed your ferrets free reign during the party, the fuzzies might have curled up in a box filled with wrapping paper.

If you don't normally cage your ferrets, you should consider doing so when you have company. Unless all your guests are ferret owners themselves, they're not likely to be as careful as you are to watch where they're stepping or sitting. Or to make sure that no ferrets slip out the front door. Since it is not socially acceptable to cage your guests, caging your ferrets is the next safest option.

Since it is not socially acceptable to cage your guests, caging your ferrets is the next safest option.

Hazard #2: Food

Guests might be tempted to give your ferrets inappropriate treats. Remind everyone who comes into your home that ferrets should not be fed "people" food. This includes hors d'oeuvres, chips, nuts, candy, and alcoholic beverages among other things. Again, keeping your ferrets away from your guests is an easy way to avoid a disaster.

What about after the guests have gone home? It is a good idea to make sure that no one dropped food on the floor that might harm your ferret if he gets into it — things like chocolate or nuts could pose a danger. Also be sure to check that no one left open alcoholic beverages anywhere your ferret could get to them. Most ferrets love the taste of beer and wine and other liquor. Cleaning up the party area (and anywhere in your home a guest might have wandered) before you let your ferrets have run of it is good prevention. Remember to watch for discarded wrappers and containers also.

Hazard #3: Decorations

Christmas and Chanukah wrappings can seem like tasty treats to the undiscerning ferret palate. Make sure you take your trash outside before your ferrets are allowed out to play. Ribbons, bows, tinsel, balloons, confetti, and garland can all cause life-threatening blockages if swallowed. In addition, gift packaging like Styrofoam or plastic can be a danger, as can desiccants (those packets of crystals that usually come with items like handbags).

Make sure to place candles well out of your ferret's reach. If you have decorative lights, make sure the ferrets don't chew on the wires.

Watch other decorations and holiday items as well — things like nativity sets and dreidels that curious ferrets might want to drag off as their own.

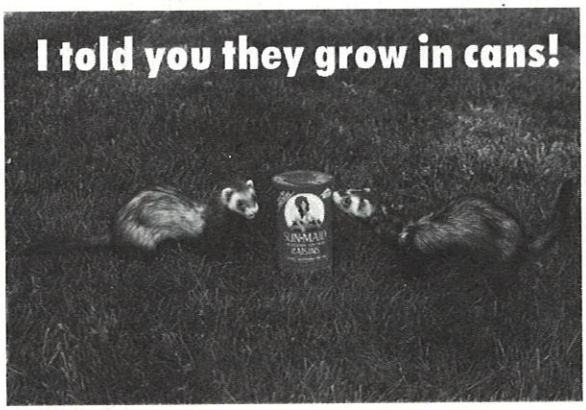
Hazard #4: Trees & Plants

It is best to keep your ferrets from climbing the Christmas tree. If your ferret climbs the tree, he could fall and get hurt. Keeping the tree in a non-ferret area of the house is often the best option. Another option is putting the tree on a table that your ferret cannot climb onto. If your ferret doesn't bother climbing the tree, there are still other dangers. Make sure you keep your ferret from playing with glass ornaments that might break and cut him. You should also prevent your ferret from drinking the tree water, particularly if you put any additives (even aspirin) in it. Tree water usually sits for a relatively long period of time and can become a breeding ground for germs that might make your ferret ill.

Holiday plants like poinsettia are poisonous to children and pets. Be sure to keep any potentially harmful plants well out of your ferrets' reach. Remember that ferrets can figure out ways to get to places you think they can't get to — so keep an eye on them.

With a little bit of common sense, you and your ferret can have a very happy holiday season — and make it unscathed into the new year.

NeatO! Stuff!



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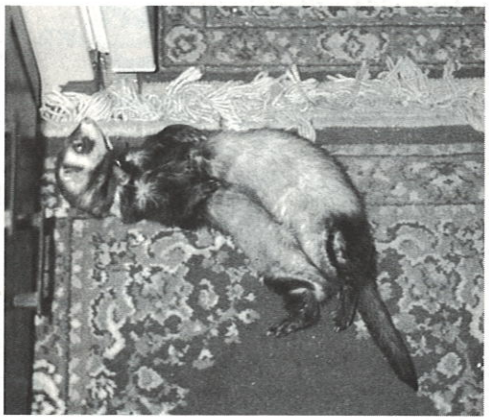
Funny Ferret Tricks

More winners in the contest that asks readers to tell us about the wacky things our favorite fuzzies will do! What does *your* ferret do for a treat? See the Contests Page (page 45) for details. You could win cool stuff from Eight In One Pet Products!

by Irene Mann, Kalamazoo, MI
Ferret: Felicity

Felicity is so-o-o curious!

GRAND PRIZE WINNER!



by Nancy Emery, Fall River, MA
Ferret: Boing

Okay, most people laugh. They cock their heads to one side like a dog that couldn't decipher that noise they just heard. "BOING??? His name is Boing?" Yes, his name is Boing. And anyone who has seen that famous "ferret dance" knows *exactly why* it's Boing! Well, we harbored this illegal alien for more than 2 years, dodging the Ferret Patrol as they drove slowly up and down the streets, shining their big spotlights in our yards, looking for these illegal "beasts" and their enablers. Happily, we can now take our ferrets out of the closet in Mass. and admit we co-exist with them in our houses.

"The Boinger" has taught me a lot about ferrets, as I was flying solo when it came to learning how to live with one of these sweet creatures. It was "Tough Love" (for *me*, that is!) when it came to learning how to cope with this new-found intelligence and creative problem solving. There were times when I wasn't sure I would make it through the boot camp! However, what I've ended up with is a furry, flat-footed and very *short* soul-mate. What more could one ask for?

Now Boing doesn't do many things that he doesn't want to do, when he doesn't want to do them. And he discovered pretty quickly that if he did his "trick" he'd get a raisin — the "Ultimate Brownie" of the ferret world. Now *I* knew, since teaching a dog to sneeze on command, that if you put a word to the natural action of an animal, they can learn to do those things when you ask — or at least that was the *theory!* Okay, okay — I said that this ferret has been a learning experience! Boing has a bit of "Ferretude" — all right, quite a bit of Ferretude. So *he* taught *me* how *this* ferret does tricks. He started it by lying flat on his back with his little front legs tucked up on his chest and his hind legs splayed outwards like a frog lying on his back. "Oh, Boing Boing, are you 'chilling out?' " inquired this Stupid Lady (that's what he calls me). "Oh sure, Lady, whatever you say. If it gets me a raisin, you call it anything you want," was his reply. I soon found out that Boing doesn't "Chill Out" when I ask him to ... Boing "Chills Out " when he wants a raisin! He's pretty patient, too. He'll lie like that for a couple of minutes waiting for that sweet morsel if I'm not fast enough for him — and I'm not usually! Hey, he does yawn when I ask him. Well, sometimes when I ask him.

PS You really have to put the picture on the floor to get the full effect of "Chilling Out."

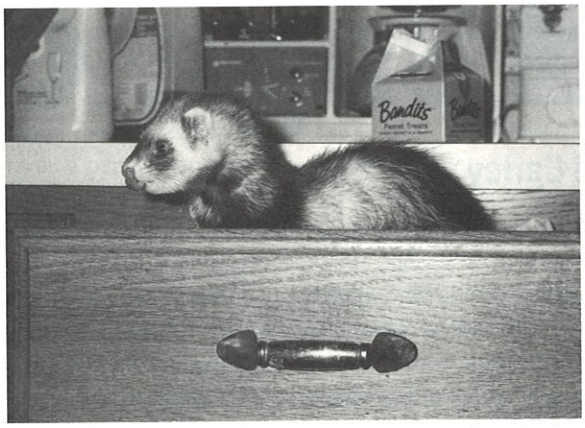
by Samantha Blatt, Hazlet, NJ
Ferret: Felicia

I have two ferrets: Felicia (9 months) and Felicity (4 months).

Felicia recently found a way to climb onto the counter where we keep the ferret treats. First she slips through the cabinet and climbs to the shelf inside. Second she pulls herself up in the crack behind the drawer. From there she pushes open the drawer with her hands and nose to get on top of the counter and finds her way to the treats.

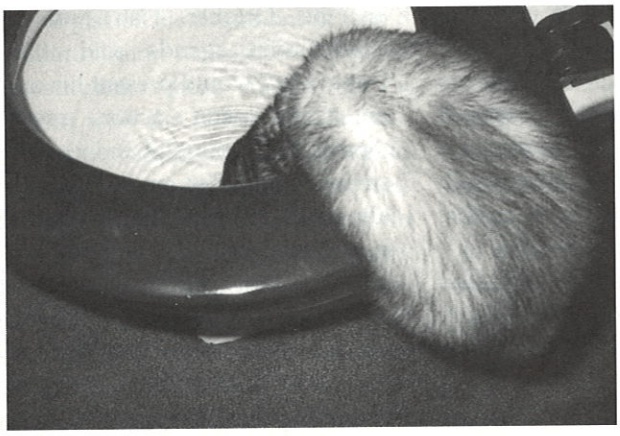
Felicity watches her and we are sure she is soon to get the hang of it also. Felicity is the one who loves to jump into the bath tub while you're taking a shower and steal sponges.

I call my pair of tricksters "A Sister Act."



by Stevi Stripling (age 12), College Station, TX
Ferret: Meshach

I am writing to tell about my ferret, Meshach (me-shak). He will do *anything* to get to his food. I found out by accident what the would to. He was out of his cage, playing when I picked up his boxed food, ready to give him some, and it shook, making a sound. His little ears perked up right away. He came running as I walked out of the room. Seeing this, I kept walking, and to my great surprise, he followed me! I walked through the living room and sat on a chair, but, Meshach (being the obstinate ferret he is) jumped right up! This continued as I went up and down the stairs, and as I circled the house. Back where we started, I rewarded him with a treat and a pat.



by Sarah Koenigseker,
Lambertville, MI
Ferret: McKenzie

Here is McKenzie drinking out of the toilet. He jumps up there by himself when he gets out of his cage. He sits on the seat and drinks.

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CALIFORNIA LEGALIZATION SPECIAL REPORT

The California Saga Continues

by Jeanne Carley

[The fight to legalize ferrets in California has been raging for several years. We welcome this update from Jeanne Carley, long-time proponent of ferret legalization and currently the Coordinator for the recently formed legalization organization, Californians For Ferret Legalization.]

The legislative year is effectively over in California, yet many, many eyes remain focused on this state as the fight for legalization of the domesticated ferret heats up in the next few months on the administrative and judicial fronts. I've had many offers of help from folks from out of state, but have yet to be able to definitively point their energy in a firm and positive direction. The problem is that in any legislative push, elected representatives care only for the opinions of their constituency, that is, the folks who elected them (and the folks who supplied the cash that elected them). For example, if you don't live in Assembly District #17, you accomplish very little by contacting Assemblyman #17, unless you have a lot of money or represent some powerful interests, because he or she knows your vote doesn't count. There are some very notable exceptions to this somewhat cynical view of our system of representation, but exceptions do not make the rule.

To briefly bring you up to date on recent events in California, in November 1995 in San Diego, the Fish and Game Commission voted to go to notice and publish its intent to amend the list of prohibited wildlife by removing the domesticated ferret. The acting Deputy Attorney General (AG) for the Commission said that the Commission had the authority to make such a move. However, the Department of Fish and Game (DFG) raised the issue of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), stating that any proposed change was subject to review and compliance with the act. (The logic of applying CEQA to an animal that doesn't belong in the hands of DFG in the first place still escapes me, but I'm learning that there is a very creative side to an intransigent agency.) DFG said an environmental document on the impact of legalizing ferrets was needed but that it would not be able to begin working on the document until the new mammal regulations were completed... in May of 1996, some six months later. The schedule proposed at that time called for DFG to produce the document by August, after which the Commission would go to notice. That was delay tactic number one.

> Though we tend to think of them as family members, domesticated pets have a unique and protected status as private property.

In August we heard that DFG had changed its mind on the CEQA document. The agency decided, after nine months of mulling it over, that it was not going to produce the document at all. We were also informed that the ferret issue was one of a select few (less than 6%) CEQA projects that necessitated a full-blown Environmental Impact Report, prepared by hired consultants at a possible cost of $50,000–$150,000. A scenario as repugnant as demanding that Rosa Parks submit a financial impact review to the Alabama municipal bus system before being allowed to legally take that front row seat was rejected outright by everyone closely involved with the issue. Good Californians, whose only crime is the equivalent of owning a puppy or kitten, should not have to pay for any study proving what is already known as fact in other states. That was delay tactic number two.

By early September, perhaps due to outside pressure, DFG agreed to complete the study and we were informed that the Commission would indeed go to notice with a hearing date in February 1997. However, in late September a red flag went up when an item on the October Fish and Game Commission agenda said that the Deputy AG would present his opinion on Commission action regarding ferrets. This sounded innocent on its surface, but after an involvement of almost eight years with this issue, you begin to notice the patterns of a rogue agency. I called Jan Goldsmith's office (our Assembly author) and discovered the incredible news that the Deputy AG who issued the first opinion regarding the Commission's authority wasn't the regular Deputy AG assigned to the Commission, and that the Commission's usual Deputy AG was of the opinion that the Commission did not have the authority to remove ferrets from the wildlife list. This information was revealed in an August 27 memo detailing the minutes of the Commission meeting that was sent to our author's office. I called the office on September 26,

when I spotted the item, to ask if they knew what it was all about. By September 27, our attorney, Joe Kouri, was working to get the hearing delayed on the item in question. On September 30, my father (Floyd Carley) received a letter dated September 27 from the Deputy AG for the Commission stating that he was looking for legal arguments on the issue of jurisdiction and wanted them submitted by October 1. That gave us less than 24 hours to research and submit legal opinions supporting our position. When challenged on the lack of appropriate prior notice, the Deputy AG replied that he didn't have to give us any notice at all, but did relent on the hearing date; it was moved back one month. This is delay tactic number three.

This brings us to where we are today. We will be making the appropriate legal arguments to the Deputy AG who intends to present them — his arguments and ours — to the Commission at the hearing scheduled for this November. Based on this Deputy AG's previous actions, I, for one, am very uncomfortable with the idea of allowing him to deliver our legal arguments. Something will surely be lost in the translation. Thus far, the gist of his argument is that if the Commission reclassifies ferrets as domesticated, there might be a problem with the Office of Administrative Law because the change would be inconsistent with the statute. Yes, Mr. Deputy Attorney General, I do agree we have an inconsistent statute, but when the DOMESTICATED ferret is finally classified correctly and removed from the list of prohibited WILDLIFE, we will have rectified the situation. Most people have never read the sections in the Fish and Game Code banning ferrets, so let me shed some light on them. Section 2118 states that "wild animal" means "... any animal of the class Aver (birds), Mammalia (mammals), ... which is not normally domesticated in this state AS DETERMINED BY THE COMMISSION [emphasis added]." Sounds pretty clear to me, as it must have been to the original Deputy AG, until his boss came back and explained it to him.

What can you do to help? If you live in California, you must get involved. A 45-day window on public commentary will eventually open when the Commission holds its hearing on ferrets. At that time, every Californian valuing the truth and private property rights must write the Commission urging it to respect those rights and the truth by classifying the ferret correctly as domesticated. To be advised of that opening, I urge you to write me so I can let you know the dates your opinions will be heard. The window on accepting public commentary is physical in nature — letters sent before or after will not get through.

Even if ferret ownership is not something that interests you, you do have an interest in this issue. Because this not just about ferrets. An agency that oversteps its mandate often enters territory that is protected by our State Constitution. In this case, the clash that arises when this wildlife agency moves into the arena of domesticated pets involves private property rights. Though we tend to think of them as family members, domesticated pets have a unique and protected status as private property. In this respect they are no different from your home, wallet, or bank account. The state's ability to ban ownership of animals ends with the animal's classification as domesticated. That is clearly why the Deputy AG is making a strong effort to give the Commission an excuse to abdicate its authority to amend the wildlife list. Reclassifying the ferret as domesticated will effectively end the DFG's involvement with ferrets. If this agency is allowed to roam outside its clear mandate — wildlife — you may not have a problem with DFG this time on this issue, but you will next time on another issue.

If you live outside California, I'd like you to consider writing our Governor, Pete Wilson, to tell him how you feel about the welcome you and your pet would receive if you were to visit or move to California with your contraband ferret in tow. Governor Wilson is a close political ally of both Governor Weld of Massachusetts and Governor Engler of Michigan. Both of these governors recently signed ferret legalization bills in their states, removing from their citizens the burden of shouldering a bad law. Governor Wilson should support this issue. It fits in perfectly with his call for reduced government intrusion into people's lives. If you have a story about turning down a job or promotion because of the ferret restriction in California, tell him about it. If you had a bad experience with California's ferret law, tell him about it. If California is off your list of states you will visit, tell him. Kindly let him know that until you and your private property are welcome here, you will not spend your private property (tourist dollars) here. Remind Governor Wilson of his commitment to removing the burden bad government places on good people. Agencies are top directed. If left to their own devices they do what they do best — regulate, regulate, regulate. Governor Wilson can help. Governor Wilson should help.

To write Governor Wilson:
Governor Pete Wilson
Governor's Office
State Capitol
Sacramento, CA 95814

To write or call Jeanne Carley:
Jeanne Carley
410 Mountain Home Road
Woodside, CA 94062
(415) 851-3750

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CALIFORNIA LEGALIZATION SPECIAL REPORT

Going to California

Mary talks with Suni

Ferrets are legal to own in 48 states — all but Hawaii and California. This is the story of Suni and Jim, who recently moved from Pennsylvania (where ferrets are legal) to California (where ferrets are not legal) with their "long cats": Seymore, Slippers, Jasper, Frosty, and Raisin Caine. The mere act of crossing the border from one state into the next has transformed these otherwise upstanding citizens into criminals. In this article, Suni tells what it was like bringing her ferrets into California.

Caine on the dashboard. Rebel with a cause!

* * *

While going across the country, most of the people we met didn't know very much about ferrets if they knew anything at all. Most had seen ferrets either in a pet store or on television, but they didn't have any. We ran into quite a few people who, once they played with ours, wanted one. That was actually one of the fun things about bringing them across country with us: We got to talk to a lot of people through Ohio, Illinois, Iowa, Nebraska, Wyoming, Utah, and Nevada.

When we were in Nevada, we heard classifieds on the radio and someone was actually selling their ferret. We kept thinking, "We're not going to hear that in California. We're not going to be able to look in the paper or call the humane society and make sure they don't have any." You can't just give out your name and say, "If you ever have any, give us a call. We take them all."

We just started a rescue here. I've got three people on a list who are looking for ferrets. When someone calls, you ask them where they got your name; you feel like you really have to be cautious of anybody who calls about ferrets.

You Better Watch Your Step

Things with the ferrets are a lot different here from how they were in Pennsylvania. I've always taken my ferrets out for walks and I can't do that anymore and that's hard. We used to take the ferrets to the park. I'd have them out playing in the backyard or take them out front. I was never afraid to take them outside. Now we have a huge room they play in and they also play in the living room sometimes. But we have to make sure

(continued on page 20)

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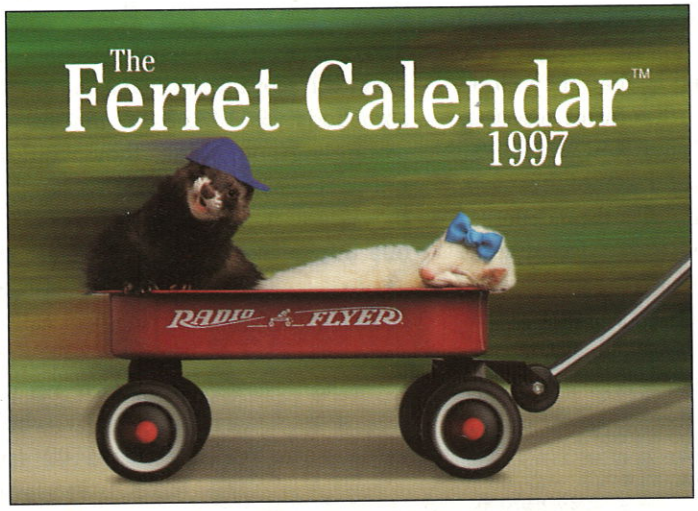

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Greetings From The Ferret Calendar™

Each box has ten 5"x7" matching cards with envelopes. Cards are blank inside with informative ferret facts and fictions on the back to better educate owners and the public about the true nature and special needs of the ferret.

56

61

58

57

62

60

Look for the Ferret Calendar products in your local pet store.
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Our mission is the humane treatment of domesticated ferrets in California and across the nation. Your support helps us with our work in education, rescue, and legalization.

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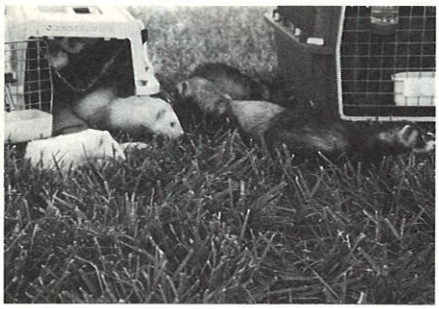

Rest stop! Jasper (in hammock), Slippers, Caine, Seymore, Squiggles and Wiggles — Time to stretch your legs!

the curtains are closed. It's so silly. We have neighbors now who had ferrets about 15 years ago and they're the only neighbors who can see into our house. Every so often I'll bring a ferret over there because they just love the ferrets. But if someone goes by, we turn around the other way so they can't see what we have. You feel like you're doing something wrong — and you are, but you're not. It doesn't make any sense.

Leaving the Ferrets Behind

I had a couple of people ask me why I didn't leave the ferrets or give them to somebody. My response was, "Well, if you had to go to a state that said you couldn't have kids, would you just leave your kids behind or give them to somebody else?" These are my kids, I couldn't leave them. It's not something that I would have even considered. So many people have them here, so I figured we'd find a way to hide them here until they're legal. I think they estimate between 500,000 and a million ferrets in California.

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Vet Care in California

Vet care for the ferrets is a little more expensive here but not too much. The hardest thing was just finding a good vet who knew ferrets or would see them. Most could give them their shots but they really didn't know anything about ferrets. The concern with that is that they don't necessarily have the ferret vaccinations. I actually found our vet on the internet. She has ferrets of her own and she's done all the different surgeries. I talked to her for about a half hour on the phone and then I met with her just to chat and to get a feeling of whether I thought she knew what she was doing. She's 40 minutes away and she's the closest one who knows about ferrets. That makes me nervous because I think, "What if there's an emergency?" I think I can get to her in about a half hour if there's no traffic. In Philadelphia we found a ferret-knowledgeable vet who was only five blocks away.

WE'RE TALKING ABOUT IT LIKE WE'RE DRUG SMUGGLING OR SOMETHING IT'S RIDICULOUS IT'S ABSOLUTELY RIDICULOUS

Scofflaws?

We've never been in a position where we worried about getting caught for doing something. Maybe speeding. But now, especially when we have the ferrets in the car with us, I'm constantly looking. I know I shouldn't worry about being pulled over, but I do because I don't want anybody to see them. Because you never know who knows whom.

When we were driving into California, we decided that I would drive the car in case we got caught. We figured the driver would get in the most trouble. I was thinking: "I'm going to get arrested and they're going to have it in the paper: PHILADELPHIAN ARRESTED FOR SMUGGLING FERRETS INTO CALIFORNIA." I was laughing at the same time — this is the most ridiculous thing I ever heard. But it could happen. My husband just finished his residency. We came out here because he's going to be a pediatrician in the neighboring town. We didn't know if they could take his medical license away or something if we got caught. The chances of that would probably be very slim, but you never know. All somebody would know is that he was smuggling something, they wouldn't know it was ferrets. They'd laugh if they knew it was ferrets. We planned out things like this just in case. We told our parents we'd be calling them if we got caught. If we got arrested it would be a $500 per ferret fine. We brought in seven (our own five and two babies for friends here), so we're talking $3,500.

When we were talking about getting arrested, I told Jim, "I'm not letting them take the ferrets away." They can't take them from you; they can make you take them out of the state. They can make you show proof that you've gotten them out of state, but they can't take them from you. But if you don't know that — and a lot of people don't — you think that you have to hand them over. Jim and I were also talking about what to do if someone sees us with the ferrets: run for the car, jump in, speed off somewhere. We're talking about it like we're drug smuggling or something. It's ridiculous, it's absolutely ridiculous. But we contemplated all that stuff.

Going Through the Checkpoint

There are several areas where you can come into California and you don't really have to go through a checkpoint. Actually, you're already in California for probably about a half hour to 45 minutes before you even get to a checkpoint. It's an agricultural

I'm not guilty of anything but being fuzzy and cute!

checkpoint: They usually ask you if you have any fruits or vegetables and you say "No" and they wave you through. But they've gotten a little bit more stringent — this is probably more in southern California — they've got dogs to sniff out drugs and that sort of stuff. We weren't even sure that they would recognize that we had ferrets or that we weren't allowed to bring them in. But it wasn't a risk we wanted to take.

Usually, if you have California plates you don't have to go through the checkpoint. There's kind of a separate line for Californians returning back into the state. Most of the time they just wave you through because you have the plates. We're both from California originally. Since our parents live here, we decided to use my father-in-law's car. We planned to put the ferrets in the back of his trunk for about 10 minutes. I didn't want them in the trunk. I was thinking about carbon monoxide and how it was hot out. I was really nervous.

The night before we drove into California we were in Nevada visiting Jim's relatives who told us that we didn't have to go through the checkpoint at all. They said we could go through a sort of business route that goes through town and then comes back out on the freeway about a quarter mile past the checkpoint. We wouldn't even have to go through it. We thought we'd try that. But we hadn't seen where the route comes back on the freeway so I was really nervous about it. We weren't sure whether anybody would be waiting at the end of town just to see if you look suspicious. We thought "we look like smugglers don't we?" I had all these things going through my mind: "There's going to be cops just sitting there waiting for us. The Fish and Game is going to be holding a sign that says *Pull over here.*" I was just really nervous about the whole thing.

We were going to meet Jim's father at a train station and put the ferrets in his car. We ended up driving up by a golf course where there was nobody around and we took the ferrets out of our car so he and his girlfriend could look at them and take pictures. Jim's father ended up following us and showing us where to get back on the freeway.

When we got back on the freeway we could look back and see the checkpoint several hundred yards down the road. I was just staring back at it waiting for somebody. Just waiting. We went for probably five or six miles and then I started crying because I was just so happy. Once we went for several miles I kind of figured we were OK. I kept thinking, "just make sure you've got on the cruise control because we don't want to get pulled over."

* * *

A note from Eric:

Although ferrets are illegal in California, it is our number three state for *Modern Ferret* subscriptions. This is a pretty strong testimony to the size of the ferret population there — our two strongest states are New York and New Jersey (close to home where we've been actively promoting ourselves with in-store appearances at pet stores). That's a lot of ferrets in hiding.

We are running this piece to demonstrate to our fellow ferret owners how frightening this California situation can be on a personal level — when all of a sudden it's YOUR ferrets on the line. We don't think you should go out and become ferret smugglers, but you should understand what these people are going through in order to stay with their furry family members. Some California ferret organizations take the official stance that no one should attempt to bring ferrets into California until they are legal. Despite this, there are a lot of ferrets in California.

The California situation is the result of a lot of untruths about ferrets. It's important for every ferret owner to do what they can to dispel untruths about ferrets. Every ferret can be an ambassador to the general public — showing off their ferret charm. By working to create pro-ferret awareness, you can help prevent anti-ferret legislation in your community.

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FERRETS

by Deborah Riccio

I've always been an animal lover. As a kid I was forever bringing home stray kittens. Dogs were out of the question until I was older; then I rescued Heidi, a mutt from the local pound. I couldn't have asked for a better dog. She was 15 years old when she died, and I never thought I would find another one like her.

I didn't, until seven years ago when I rescued Bailey, a Lab/Shepherd mix. By that time, I had had ferrets in my life for about four years. I also had a four-year-old Doberman (Blaze) as well. Blaze was no Heidi or Bailey, that's for sure! Although Bailey was really good with the ferrets, Blaze wasn't.

Three years after I adopted Bailey, I adopted Hannah — a white Boxer. Hannah proved to be as trustworthy with the ferrets as Bailey was.

So what made the difference in how these three dogs behaved around the ferrets? Mutt status? Hannah is a purebred Boxer. Formal obedience training? Bailey and Hannah never went to classes, while Blaze had two years' worth. Female versus male? Age? Perhaps. In looking back, I suspect several elements factored into my experiences.

Bailey and Hannah were both puppies when I adopted them while Blaze was six months old before he came into my life. Patterns and experiences can make an indelible mark during those first few months; it's much easier to bring up a puppy with a ferret as opposed to introducing an older dog to a ferret for the first time. I'm not saying it can't be done, but most of us aren't seasoned dog trainers and don't have the knowledge or experience to do it.

When I got Blaze, he had a facial scar resembling a cat scratch. I don't know what happened to him, but he was never able to fully accept living with my cats or ferrets. I remember one summer hearing this huge commotion and going outside to investigate. Blaze had Oliver, one of my cats, cornered in the backyard. Poor Oliver had a few marks on him, but a vet check that day indicated no serious injuries had been sustained.

My first ferret was a little Marshall Farms chocolate male, Mickey, who managed to live until shortly after his seventh birthday (in spite of my ignorance about ferrets at the time). One evening Mickey sauntered upstairs with Blaze right behind him. All of a sudden Mickey let out this ear-piercing scream. Anyone who has ever heard a ferret scream knows just how chilling a sound it is. I rushed upstairs to rescue my little ferret. Blaze had Mickey in his mouth and was shaking him back and forth like a rag. Mickey banged his head into the door frame and, about a month later, developed a bony growth requiring surgical removal.

Would I have had similar problems if I had acquired Blaze when he was ten weeks old rather than six months old? Possibly, but I don't think so.

Several years ago, my vet at the time discouraged me from adopting a gorgeous little Pitbull puppy named Angus. Although Angus got along quite well with the ferrets, this particular vet felt that once he was fully grown he might harm them. I've always regretted not taking that puppy.

I've seen baby deer and baby wolves playing together on Marty Stouffer's "Wild America" series. Baby animals by nature seem to adjust well to other species. My first ferret rescue sent me to a house where I saw a cockatiel perched on the back of a cat with no resistance or aggression on the cat's part. Recently, a dog behaviorist on a local TV show mentioned that the best time to introduce a dog to any other species it might live with is between the ages of 7 and 17 weeks. So, if at all possible, raise your ferrets

& DOGS

Max (dog) & Murdoch (ferret) by Warren Olsen

with a puppy. A puppy raised with just one or two ferrets will easily adjust to any future ferrets that might come into the household.

Some dogs, such as Jack Russell Terriers for instance, are hunters. While I would hesitate bringing a first ferret into a home with an older dog, I'm not convinced it wouldn't work if the Jack Russell were a puppy. Although some might disagree with me, I don't think the breed you have — no matter what kind of dog — is as important as the *age* of your dog. You will be much more successful if your dog is very young when first introduced to ferrets.

Our Shelter Director has not only a Pitbull, but also a German Shepherd and a Chihuahua. In addition to her own ten ferrets, she has shelter ferrets coming and going all the time. None of these dogs has ever harmed any of the ferrets. In fact, she has often found a ferret or two curled up with the Pitbull in the dog crate! *It's all in how you raise your dog.*

If you teach your dog nothing else, make sure he understands the word, "No." I can't stress enough the importance of this word. This command is more important than "lie down," "go fetch," or "roll over." Hannah and Bailey are very tolerant of the ferrets. BJ (ferret) likes to grab hold of a doggy ear and hang on. The

dogs will look at me, look disparagingly at BJ, then back at me. I just say "NO!" To them that means no matter what, they are not allowed to touch the ferret — and they don't. In some instances dogs that are professionally trained learn the command "leave it."

I don't want anybody to think that my dogs are mercilessly abused — if one of the ferrets plays too rough with the dogs, I step in and help out; the dogs know and understand that only I am allowed to take corrective measures, and they trust me to do it.

Many dogs like to become familiar with you by taking your hand or arm into their mouth. To allow this, in my opinion, is a mistake. Once you have set those parameters, you have given your dog too much freedom of choice, and he'll have a hard time understanding why it's OK to chomp on your hand but not on your ferret. Blaze always wanted to grab my hand or arm and just hang on to it. In retrospect, I should never have allowed him to do that. He believed it was all right to put his mouth on anything that moved.

Even ferrets that have been raised in a no-dog household adapt quite easily when first introduced to dogs.

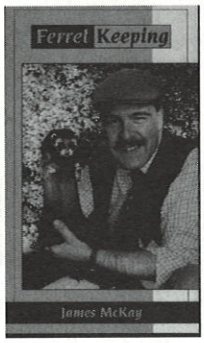
Ferrets are very trusting little animals. Even ferrets that have been raised in a no-dog household adapt quite easily when first introduced to dogs. *If the dog doesn't bother the ferret, the ferret won't bother the dog.* I've seen this over and over again in my own house.

Although I don't take in a lot of ferret boarders, I occasionally take in one or two that have never been exposed to dogs. I don't really do anything differently. My dogs know they aren't allowed to get rough with the ferrets and are, in fact, very gentle and calm with them. Once the new ferret realizes that this huge "beast" isn't going to bother him, he relaxes and acts like every other ferret in the house — running through tubes, weasel war-dancing all over the place, dooking and booping — just as though the dogs weren't even there.

Never leave your ferrets alone with the dog. Just as you shouldn't leave young children unsupervised with the dog, cat, or ferret, don't leave your ferret unsupervised with the dog.

To crate or not to crate... to cage or not to cage... For safety reasons, my dogs are crated and my ferrets are caged whenever I leave the house. Although it rarely happens, I have had ferrets break out of their cages. If my dogs were loose in the house, problems and accidents could happen

NEW VIDEO!
FERRET KEEPING
FOR CHRISTMAS GIVING



An introduction to keeping ferrets for working, racing or as pets. James McKay gives advice on choosing a ferret, shows examples of indoor and outdoor housing, and gives a detailed account of what to feed—and what not to feed. We are shown how to embark on a successful breeding program with information on basic genetics and record keeping. Footage of an actual birth is narrated in detail, and we then follow the development of the kits, with recommendations on how to care for them at different ages. James shows how to handle and train ferrets properly and emphasizes what fun ferrets can be for both adults and children. This video explodes the myth of ferrets being sneaky and aggressive animals, revealing how engaging and good-natured they really are. James McKay is a zoologist, writer and is internationally acknowledged as one of the world's leading authorities on ferrets. 56 minutes in color. VHS. $34.95

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Another play-time photo by Warren Olsen

Erica Zimmermann's dog Shane playing with Fat Boy

Shane and Fat Boy

For my own peace of mind, everyone is crated and caged when I'm not home.

with a ferret loose as well. So, for my own peace of mind, everyone is crated and caged when I'm not home.

While I have not gone into the specifics of how you should teach your dogs these basic rules of ferret etiquette, the bottom line is that *you must have total control of your dog*. How you accomplish that is between you and your dog. Whether you decide to use your own methods or obtain assistance from a book, video, or professional dog trainer is up to you. I hope you have found these ideas helpful guidelines to keep in mind when dogs and ferrets live in the same house.

Deborah Riccio is President of the Western New York and Finger Lakes Ferret Association (WNYFLFA). Before becoming president in 1994, she served as the group's secretary beginning in 1990. She has had ferrets since 1985 and has been breeding them since 1993. Currently, she works at the University of Rochester Medical Center in the Autopsy-Pathology Department. Deborah shares her home with 17 ferrets, 2 dogs, and 3 cats.

Big thanks to Donna & Warren Olsen and Max & Murdoch and to Erica Zimmermann and Shane, Fat Boy, & Skinny.

More Dogs & Ferrets by Pamela Grant

[Here is another personal account of how dogs and ferrets get along. Pamela Grant has lived with 22 ferrets, 8 cats, 1 dog, 1 rabbit, 2 mice, 2 hamsters, and other assorted rodents as well as varying numbers of shelter ferrets.]

We took in an adult stray Chihuahua, a terrier, and a miniature pincher mix. Cali is 10 pounds. She was found in California, so I doubt she has ever met a ferret before. She loves to chase toys and shake her head and beat the toy from side to side. She does not chase the cats, and they have accepted her. She will chase the ferrets, but assumes the "let's play" pose when they stop. The only animals she avoids are the unaltered breeding ferrets in my house, especially the males. She seems to know that all they have on their minds is mating.

I would recommend that if you own a dog who chases squirrels, rabbits, or birds that you not have a ferret. I have heard too many stories of dogs breaking into cages trying to attack or catch a ferret, and usually the ferret comes out dead. A cage will not always protect the occupants nor always contain them. My personal observations and contacts regarding dogs lead me to believe that larger dogs are better with ferrets than smaller dogs. You should know your dog before getting a ferret, or know the breeds before getting a dog to join a ferret household. Ferrets like to nip at the heels, tails, and feet of canines, and a dog with large feet can step on and injure a ferret. Dogs also have mouths large enough to snap the head off an offending ferret in one bite. Also remember that dogs can carry canine distemper and not show signs of the disease or even suffer from it. Canine distemper is fatal to ferrets, so make sure any new additions to a household of dogs or ferrets are up-to-date on shots.

Pamela Grant is Director of Shelters That Adopt & Rescue (STAR) Ferrets, a network of ferret shelters and owners throughout the United States. For a free listing of ferret shelters, contacts, vets, supplies, clubs, etc., in your state, send a LONG self-addressed stamped envelope to: STAR* Ferrets, P.O. Box 1714, Springfield, VA 22151-0714. If you have Internet access, please visit STAR*'s homepage at:*

<http://www.csc.peachnet.edu/~rpoore/STAR/STAR.html>.

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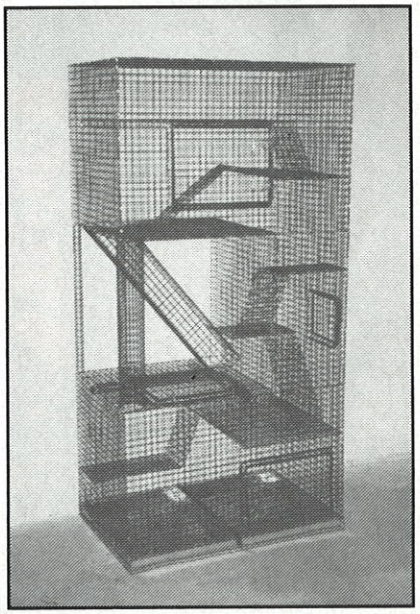

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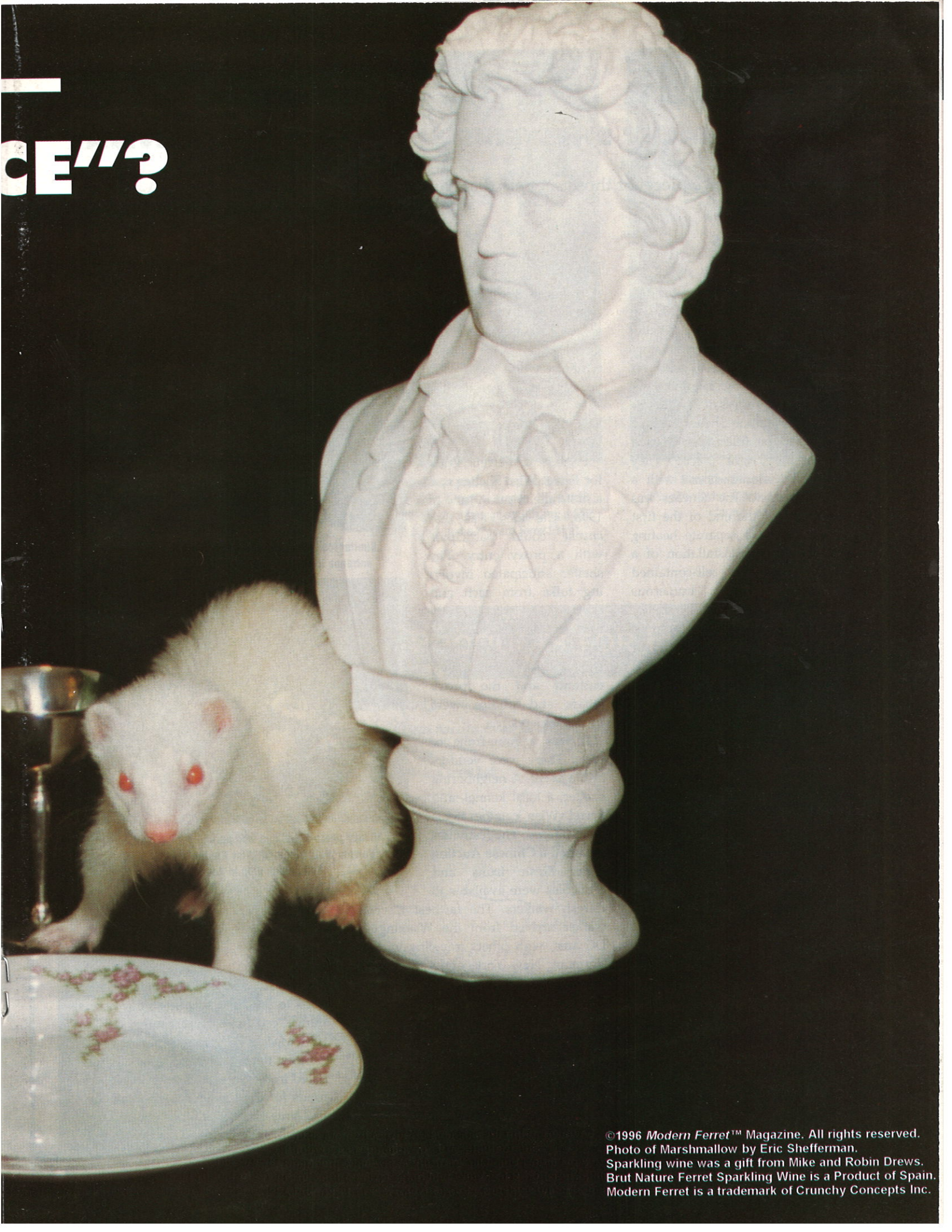

CE"?

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WALK A THON '96

AN INDEPENDENT SHELTER'S STRUGGLE FOR SURVIVAL

(an incentive piece for those shelters that constantly need a cash-flow resource)

by Alicia Drakiotes

Shortly after ferrets were legalized in New Hampshire in January of 1993, it became apparent that a ferret shelter was needed in Southwest New Hampshire. The many ferrets sold in pet shops were being evicted by landlords — What to do? The founders of Ferret Wise Rescue & Rehabilitation Shelter decided the need could be filled, and started looking for the "right place." They found an old Victorian home with a first-floor apartment. The clincher was that two rooms at the end of the first floor unit were on a separate heating circuit and, with the installation of a wall, would become a self-contained shelter complete with numerous windows and two doorways. A shelter was born. It was the first free-standing New England shelter and it had potential. Renovations progressed, and on Christmas Eve of 1994 the space was ready for ferrets. Merry Christmas!

Licensed in January of 1995, the shelter had a heavy volume the first year. Ninety-nine ferrets entered the facility from January to December. Many were lymphoma patients and adrenal patients and 17 were unaltered animals. The shelter folks knew this was more than they could bite off — What to do to keep this shelter going? A fundraiser program running year round.

A fundraiser catalog was first started and three raffles of baskets of ferret goodies (a stash for a single winner) were held each year. Still more was needed.

THE BIRTH OF
WALK A THON

Friends & Ferrets Walk for Ferret Wise Shelter was a first-time event in June of 1996. The idea was that *anyone* could participate with a proxy entry. The shelter anticipated involving folks from each and every state, though only five states were actually represented. Volunteers walked for the proxy entrants and the proxy letters and photos were posted on a board.

It was a mini-frolic of sorts. There were vendors at the event. A neighboring shelter, a local kennel, and Ferret Wise catalog items were offered. The festivities included a Chinese Auction table. Fresh fruits and munchies were available to refresh walkers. The farthest traveled walker arrived from the Washington, DC area, with others traveling in from Vermont, New York, and Connecticut. The walk route followed paths and trails through natural landscaped beauty, a bird sanctuary, and the Ashuelot River Park.

The coveted Top Fundraiser's Trophy was an original hand-crafted plaque with the shelter logo etched onto a mirror inset. This beauty was a gift from shelter supporters Jim and Jeanne Stadtmiller of upstate New York. The trophy stayed close to the shelter with winners Tony and Linda Ricard of Rindge, New Hampshire, who raised more than $160 in pledges for the shelter. All winners received subscriptions to the shelter newsletter, ribbons, framed certificates, and a mug or t-shirt from *Modern Ferret* magazine.

More than 43 ferret friends participated in the event, which raised $700 in funds for the shelter. Not too bad for a first-time event! The funds realized from the walk a thon fed and paid vet bills for the shelter ferrets for a period of nearly

Shelter founders Dino and Alicia Drakiotes outside the entrance to Ferret Wise Shelter in Marlborough, NH.

Group photo of walkers who participated in Friends & Ferrets Walk for Ferret Wise Shelter June 1, 1996 at Wheelock Park in Keene, NH.

ANIMAL CONNECTION

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five months. Shelter supporters have been caught up in the momentum and their requests have prompted a repeat of the walk a thon event. The 2nd Annual Friends & Ferrets Walk for Ferret Wise Shelter is scheduled for June 7, 1997 in Keene, New Hampshire. As shelter upkeep is nearly an annual budget of $12,000, we hope that many more will participate in the fun and festive event.

Shelter Mom Alicia Drakiotes will be happy to help other shelters in establishing their own walk a thon by giving pointers and answering questions. Those who are interested should write Ferret Wise Shelter, PO Box 561, Marlborough, NH 03455-0561 or call 603-876-4975.

Alicia Drakiotes is Operations Director of Ferret Wise Shelter.

Alicia Drakiotes presents Top Fundraiser award to Linda Ricard of Rindge, NH. Linda received a trophy, a framed certificate, a $50 savings bond, and a *Modern Ferret* t-shirt.

Linda Ricard and her first ferret "Razcal," who she carries with her everywhere in the form of a tattoo.

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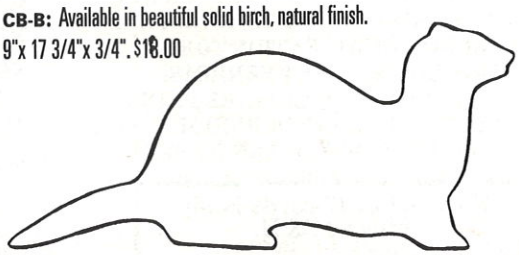

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RM-F: "Expert toe taster first".
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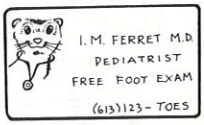
RM-1: "No.1 ferret". 4"x 2 1/2".
(not illustrated, similar to RM-F)



RM-MD: "I.M. Ferret M.D.
Podiatrist free foot exam".
2"x 3 1/2"

RM-PI: "V.I. Ferret Private Investigator no job too small to dig into". 2"x 3 1/2"
(not illustrated, similar to RM-MD, the ferret smokes a pipe)

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Gonzo's Story:

Adrenal Surgery & Recovery

When we first met Gonzo, he had very little hair left.

He has already started growing back hair. At the time of the photo his hair was still short — like a ferret crew-cut.

For a veterinary-level discussion of adrenal-associated endocrinopathy, order a copy of Modern Ferret *Issue #6.* *See page 32 for details.*

Finding a ferret-knowledgeable veterinarian can be difficult. Many veterinarians learn little, if anything, about ferrets when they are in school. Most ferret-knowledgeable veterinarians got that way because they made the effort to look things up and consult with other veterinarians. As a ferret owner, you must learn what you can about your pet's health so you and your veterinarian can work together to keep your ferret in the pink.

Adrenal disease is one of the most common problems affecting ferrets that are over four years of age. It is treatable, but only if you or your veterinarian recognize the symptoms for what they are. Many veterinarians who are unfamiliar with the symptoms of adrenal disease in ferrets attempt to treat the fur loss without looking any further. This is a fairly common scenario regarding adrenal disease in ferrets.

Gonzo was about five years old when he started losing his fur. Carrie and Adam were concerned and took Gonzo to the veterinarian. The veterinarian diagnosed the fur loss as a food allergy. When changing his food had no effect, Carrie and Adam brought Gonzo back to the veterinarian. This time, Gonzo's fur loss was attributed to photoperiod; the veterinarian said Gonzo wasn't getting the amount of daylight he needed to grow fur. They had just moved to a new apartment, and sunlight didn't reach the ferret cage for the same amount of time as it used to. Still Gonzo's fur continued to fall out.

Carrie and Adam began to look up things on their own. They met Sue Morrow of Big Apple Ferrets and *Modern Ferret* at a local pet store during a ferret education day. They were able to talk to Sue and us about Gonzo's problem. Sue referred them to a ferret-knowledgeable veterinarian who recommended that Gonzo have surgery. The veterinarian explained what was going on with Gonzo and what he would do during the surgery. By the time Gonzo went in for surgery, he had very little fur left at all (see "before" photo).

Gonzo had surgery on August 19, 1996. The veterinarian removed Gonzo's left adrenal gland. As a matter of course, he checked all of Gonzo's organs while he had the opportunity. The veterinarian found that Gonzo's spleen had ruptured at some point and had healed itself, though it still seemed fragile. He removed the spleen so it wouldn't cause any further problems.

At one month after surgery, Gonzo was back to his old self again. He had been lethargic, but now he bounces around. His skin had been like crepe paper; now it is soft. He even started growing his fur back (see "after" photo). The fur loss took a little while to clear up. In fact, Gonzo *lost* more fur before he began to grow it back. When adrenal disease goes untreated for a long period of time, the estrogen levels in the ferret become very high. Fur growth cannot resume until the body clears the estrogen out of the system.

The important point to note is that this condition can be treated, and your ferret can go back to normal once the problem is resolved. If you, as a ferret owner, keep up on the tell-tale signs of common ferret illnesses, you can work with your veterinarian to give your ferret the best health care possible.

Thanks to Carrie Harbach & Adam Schor of Hauppauge, New York, for telling Gonzo's story.

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Cystic Kidneys in the Ferret

by Bruce H. Williams, DVM, DACVP

Fig. 1. Multiple benign renal cysts in a ferret. This type of cyst is a common incidental finding in ferrets and generally is of no clinical significance. (Photo courtesy of Dr. John Gorham, Washington State University.)

Fig. 2. Large polar renal cyst in a ferret. Note that little pericystic cortex remains; the wall of the cyst is composed largely of capsular tissue.

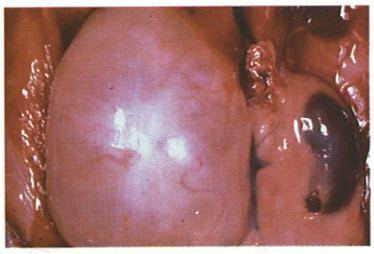

Fig. 3. Cystic kidney as a result of hydronephrosis due to ascending urinary tract infection in a ferret. The kidney measures approximately three times its normal size. (Photo courtesy Dr. X. Li and Dr. James Fox, Massachusetts Institute of Technology.)

Fig. 4. True polycystic kidney disease (PKD) in a ferret. Note the presence of numerous cortical and medullary cysts and moderate dilatation of the renal pelvis. Although large amounts of tissue are present between the cysts, the majority of this tissue is non-functional fibrous connective tissue.

I've never seen so many cysts in ferret kidneys. Renal cysts probably aren't any more prevalent than they used to be, but the more widespread use of radiography and ultrasound in the average veterinary practice allows earlier and more frequent identification than ever before.

However, once a cyst is identified, a determination must be made as to whether the cyst is causing clinical problems in the ferret. To make this determination, the practitioner must be mindful of the various cystic conditions which occur in the kidneys of the ferret, lest unnecessary removal of the affected kidney be performed.

Several conditions may result in the formation of renal cysts in the ferret. Most cystic kidneys result from one of the following, which are mentioned in order of frequency: benign congenital renal cysts, acquired cysts as a result of ascending urinary tract infection, and true polycystic kidney disease.

Benign congenital renal cysts are an extremely common incidental finding in ferrets, occurring in up to 25% of all ferrets. These cysts may be single or multiple, and may be seen in one or both kidneys. They range widely in size from small to large, replacing large amounts of the renal parenchyma as they fill with urine over time (Fig. 1 and Fig. 2, respectively). However, practitioners should realize that these cysts, although they may increase in size over the course of years, are generally of little clinical significance. Without definitive signs of impairment, these cysts should probably be left untreated, unless their size poses an imminent threat of rupture. Remember that in addition to the cyst wall, the renal capsule also

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protects from rupture. I have yet to see a clinical disease resulting from the rupture of one of these lesions.

Cystic kidneys may also result from either upper or lower urinary tract infection, or rarely, urinary bladder neoplasia. The proximate cause of the cystic change in the kidneys of these animals is blockage of the ureter due to either inflammatory detritus or neoplastic cells. Over time, there is increased pressure in the kidney due to the continued filtration of urine in the absence of its passage into the bladder. This pressure results in dilatation of the renal pelvis, atrophy of medullary and cortical elements, and finally, marked cystic change and destruction of the kidney in the form of hydronephrosis (Fig. 3). As the female ferret appears to have an unusual species predilection for the development of urinary tract infection, the prudent practitioner will carefully investigate any owner complaints of difficulty or abnormality in micturition. In addition to careful physical examination, urinalysis, and urine culture, ultrasonography of the complete urinary tract (to include the kidneys), and survey and contrast radiographic studies should be contemplated in most cases. Use of these procedures can often pick up early changes in the diameter of the renal pelvis before irreversible changes take place. In the case of renomegaly due to hydronephrosis, intravenous pyelography should be performed to evaluate the severity of disease in both kidneys, not simply the affected organ. In cases of significant unilateral hydronephrosis, unilateral nephrectomy is the treatment of choice.

The least common form of cystic kidney disease is true polycystic kidney disease (PKD). PKD has been identified in a number of species, including man, and in the majority of these has a genetic predisposition. Due to the rarity of this disease and lack of a family line of affected ferrets for in-depth study, the precise mechanism of development has not been identified. The appearance of polycystic kidneys in the ferret is shown in Figure 4; true polycystic kidneys possess numerous variably sized cysts which replace the majority of renal parenchyma. In contrast to other forms of cystic kidney disease in the ferret, clinicopathologic abnormalities relating to impaired urinary function, such as azotemia, elevated serum creatinine levels, and hyperkalemia are often present. The long-term prognosis in animals with this form of renal disease is generally poor. Due to the bilateral nature of this disease, surgical intervention is of little use; nutritional management, including decreasing the level of dietary protein, may prolong the life-span of affected individuals.

Veterinarians who treat ferrets will be presented routinely with the riddle of renal cysts. These lesions are common findings in ferrets, and in most cases, no treatment is required. Diagnosis is only part of the equation; we must also be proficient in recognizing which cases require surgical treatment, which cases may benefit from medical management, and for which cases benign neglect is the most appropriate form of therapy. As a rule, additional signs of urinary tract disease should guide the practitioner toward active intervention. Above all, remember — "If it ain't broke, don't fix it."

Bruce H. Williams, D.V.M., D.A.C.V.P., is from the Department of Veterinary Pathology, Armed Forces Institute of Pathology, Washington, DC 20306-6000. (202) 782-2600 or e-mail williams@afip.mil. Dr. Williams also is the Medical Editor of Modern Ferret *magazine.*

Note: Dr. Williams' article is a U.S. Government work; Under Title 17 of the U.S. Code, Section 105, copyright protection is not available for any work of the United States Government. Please use this article in its entirety to educate veterinarians about cystic kidneys in ferrets.

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Dental Health:

Scaling a Ferret's Teeth

by Christopher Goedeke

Like any other animal, your ferret requires routine dental maintenance. Even if you brush your ferret's teeth every week or two, you will probably see some tartar build-up on his teeth at some time. Tartar needs to be removed from the ferret's teeth by scraping or "scaling," usually with a dental instrument. You may choose to take your pet to the veterinarian to have the teeth scaled. But if you are more comfortable doing these tasks on your own, you may choose to scale your ferret's teeth yourself.

Tooth with tartar build-up

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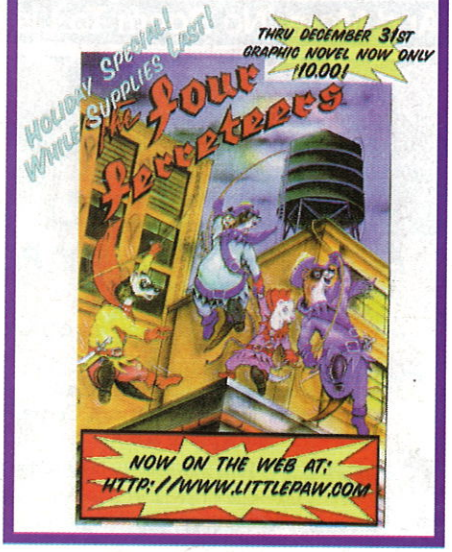
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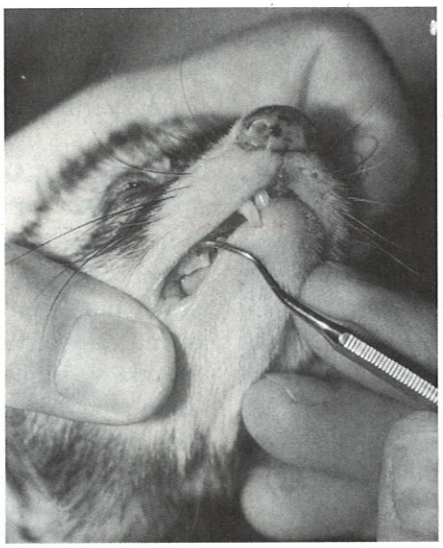
When to Scale the Teeth

A ferret's teeth need to be scaled as soon as they're not white anymore. Once the teeth go from that initial shiny white color to that tan color, that's the first indication that the teeth are building up plaque. If you scrape it while it's still plaque, it comes off relatively easily and it doesn't cause any damage. If you wait long enough, or if your ferret's enamel is softer than usual, or if you have hard water, the plaque will anneal faster and turn to tartar. How often your ferret's teeth need scaling depends on how fast the teeth actually develop plaque and tartar. Getting in there regularly to assess the situation is the best preventive measure.

Recognizing Tartar

Tartar looks almost like a small shingle or fingernail attached to the outside of the tooth. Depending on how aggressive it gets, tartar can appear on the teeth as a yellowish, brownish, or greenish tint. It can even take on a reddish tint if the gums bleed and actually stain the tartar on the outside of the teeth. The color depends on how long the tartar has been there and how much food has attached itself to it, and how badly it has been stained by other things in the ferret's mouth. Ferrets have come into the rescue whose teeth have tartar so thick that it takes just a slight pull and the entire thing comes off in one piece. It's kind of like a fake fingernail or a crown on a tooth falling off. That's not always the case, but it's nice when it happens. Anything that doesn't look white and shiny on a tooth should be taken off. However, not all discoloration on a tooth is tartar, in some cases the discoloration could be a stain.



If you are not comfortable with scaling teeth by yourself, find an experienced ferret owner to help you

A stain in a tooth presents a translucent color or it appears to be suspended in the tooth like something frozen in ice. Stains can be caused by several different things: for example, if the mother is on antibiotics while she is pregnant, the kits' teeth and enamel can become stained. If a ferret chews on litter as a kit, staining of the front upper and lower canines can result. Tartar is usually opaque and it presents a very flat, dull, hard surface on the outside of the tooth. Once you get in to look at the tooth, if it presents a nice smooth finish on the outside and if the scraper slides easily over it, it's just a stain.

Scaling Tools

You can use any of a variety of dental scrapers or even your own fingernail. Whatever you're comfortable with. Commercial scrapers are available from either dental or pet supply houses or at pet shows. There are some pointier ones and some sharper ones. Some have shovel-shaped heads, others have rounded tips. Most people are a little intimidated by the thought of putting a sharpened tool into their ferret's mouth and poking around. They usually get a little antsy and they're not happy with the results if they see blood, so they stop. In those cases, using your fingernail to scratch off the tartar might be a more comfortable choice.

Scaling Technique

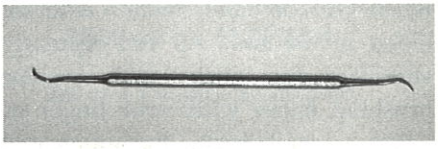
Technique depends a lot on the type of tool you have and how aggressive the tartar on the teeth is. Some tools allow you to catch the tartar just at the gumline, where you pull down and try to pull off the tartar. Whether the motion is up and down or side to side isn't as important as just getting in there and doing it. On some of them, I like to just apply a little bit of pressure to the center of the affected area, just to try to break it up, as opposed to trying to get up there and pull it off in one piece. It just seems a little less annoying for the animal. Applying pressure also allows it to just break up and I can usually push it away with much smaller strokes, trying to work downward whenever possible, but sometimes the ferret doesn't cooperate enough to allow that. It's often a good idea to brush the ferret's teeth after you scale them to buff out any rough spots.

Restraining the Ferret

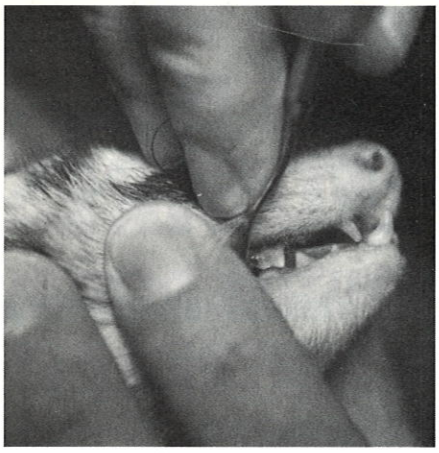
It's generally a lot easier to have someone hold the ferret while you scale the teeth. You'll probably need to scruff the ferret. If you don't have someone on-hand, you might look for a very sympathetic neighbor or family member. Somebody who wouldn't mind getting involved to a small degree. Depending on where you live, if you have no ferret clubs or rescues or shelters in your area, you can contact the local 4-H club or FFA (Future Farmers of America) or agri-science class at the local school (if you live in a more rural area).

Painful Gums and Other Problems

Your ferret's gums can become tender and red and start to recede if you let the tartar build up unchecked.



A typical tooth scaler



You'll want to hold the ferret securely

At that point, scaling your ferret's teeth can hurt. Even simple finger pressure can cause quite a bit of bleeding. The tartar actually builds up to where it starts to encroach on the gumline; the gums actually recede as the tartar builds up and then the gums become swollen and the teeth get sore. Even eating solid food becomes painful and the ferret's diet suffers. That's when they become susceptible to other things — infections in their sinuses or inner ear or just general lack of ability to fight off infection because of the weakened state by not eating as much.

Many people don't realize that serious problems can result if they don't clean their ferret's teeth. I used to think it was more of a cosmetic thing. Then one of our ferret's had a bad tooth and I just kept treating the symptoms with antibiotics. The ferret would get better and I would take him off the antibiotics. Of course, the symptoms would appear again. We had the tooth pulled and cleaned the teeth up real well and from then on the ferret was fine.

Bleeding Gums

When you scale the tartar off of your ferret's teeth for the first time, you will likely see bleeding gums. It's like not flossing for a couple of days; when you do floss, there's a lot of blood in the sink. As you regularly stimulate the gums with regular brushing either with your finger or using a small brush, the gums will firm up and the gums won't bleed. So don't be afraid if you see some blood at first, it's not going to cause any damage and within a few minutes it will stop. More often than not when the gums bleed — either from lack of stimulation or due to a nick — it looks worse than it really is. The blood blends in with the saliva in the mouth and runs across the base of the teeth so it appears that the entire mouth is filled with blood. This isn't the case. You just blot the area with a paper towel and continue. Although the ferret may be uncomfortable for a few minutes while you're scraping his teeth, he'll be a lot more uncomfortable if you let it go.

Preventive Measures

Brushing your ferret's teeth regularly can help stop tartar from forming before it starts [see *Modern Ferret* Issue #7 for how to brush teeth]. You can use a small fingertip toothbrush, but I'm a bigger fan of using a small piece of gauze — hospital bandage — wrapped around your finger once or twice. Scruff the ferret, if necessary, and just pick up his lips on one side. Use your finger to brush the teeth and gums using upward and downward motions. Brushing can also get the ferret used to you being in his mouth, so when you do go in there later for scaling, he doesn't panic as much. If your ferret has a real problem with brushing, you could put a drop or two of Ferretone or Linatone on the gauze.

When it comes to tartar build-up, several factors are involved, including whether your water is hard or soft and the quality of the enamel in the animal's mouth. Sometimes the ferret will favor eating on one side of his mouth and those teeth will be a lot cleaner than the teeth on the weaker side of the mouth.

Ferrets seem to develop a tendency to either require more attention or not. Ferrets vary. Even if your ferret doesn't build up tartar quickly, you should get in there and check the teeth regularly because you will notice loose teeth and other potential problems. These can be taken care of before they become more serious.

When to See Your Veterinarian

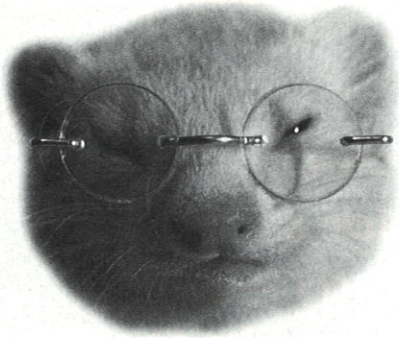
If you notice any kind of abnormality in your ferret's mouth or if you see teeth that appear broken or discolored, you should bring it to the attention of your veterinarian. If you do it properly yourself, you may never have to have a vet or anybody else go in the mouth to clean or scale your ferret's teeth. The most important thing is to observe; open the mouth and look at the teeth. If you see anything building up on the upper or lower canines or in the small depressions in the back of the molars, take care of it when you see it. If you decide to wait because it doesn't look bad, that's when it becomes a problem. So if you're cleaning ears, you should check the teeth and do the whole routine all at once. Of course, you can have your veterinarian scale your ferret's teeth if you're uncomfortable with doing it. Although veterinary cleanings can get expensive, your ferret's teeth must be cleaned.

Where to Find Assistance or Instruction

In some areas, your veterinarian might be the most accessible person to scale your ferret's teeth or to talk to about learning to scale teeth yourself. In other areas, you can often find some type of support group. It could be a club or a rescue/shelter or even a sympathetic breeder who may be interested in helping you or at least giving direction. Going to one of these people, or at least calling them, can take a lot of the initial frustration and fear out of getting into your ferret's mouth. It can also be a lot less expensive than going to your vet. Usually you can network with somebody at least one time and have them do the scaling once or twice while you watch.

Chris Goedeke and his wife Cheryl operate The Ferret Gallery Shelter & Rescue in Harleysville, PA. 215-256-1164.

Special thanks to Patty Asheuer of Lansdale, PA for the scaling photos on pages 35 and 36.



Marshmallow Explains It All

Marshmallow has been a little difficult to live with these past few months. It seems he's a little envious of Ralph having his own column. So we talked it over and decided that Marshmallow could do a great service by explaining ferret behaviors to curious (and sometimes concerned) people. Let us know if you like it. And feel free to ask Marshmallow to explain any ferret behaviors you'd like to know more about.

***

I've been around ferrets all my life. I think that — plus the fact that I'm covered in fur and have a pointy nose — singularly qualifies me to talk about what we ferrets mean when we do certain things. So here goes.

Sleeping Like a Log

Many of the ferrets I've spoken with have had this same experience when they were youngsters (kits, as you call them). They go to sleep — a nice deep wonderfully restful sleep — and before they know it some human is shaking them hysterically yelling, "Wake up!! You've got to wake up!!" Let's clear the air about this once and for all, shall we?

Relax, my large fur-less friends. Baby ferrets don't mean to frighten you when they go into their infamous deep, death-like sleeps. It's normal. Kits are either ON or OFF — they don't have a SLOW speed. When kits are in the off mode, they're really off. That way they'll have enough energy to go super-fast when they're awake. It's really quite simple.

I know what you're going to ask me: Why do ferrets act like this? The theory is that way back a few thousand years ago when we were (shudder) wild animals, we needed some way to protect the babies even when no one was there to keep watch over them. Seeing as most predators won't eat an animal that they find dead but not apparently killed by another animal, a baby ferret that *appears* dead is just as unappetizing as a really dead one. This is particularly true if the predator comes upon a whole nest of "dead" babies. A dead animal without wounds is a sign of disease, and many predators will not eat it.

So if your kit is sleeping like a log, let him! If you're really concerned, wake him *gently* by putting some food (or a favorite treat) under his nose. Please don't shake him up or make a sudden loud noise — that scares him. And you don't want to do that, do you? I thought not.

Until next time, this is Marshmallow, looking very smart in glasses.

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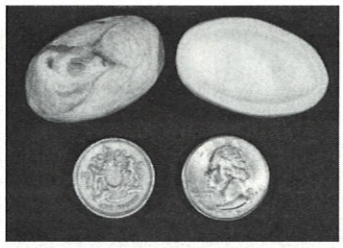

Stonecast decorative
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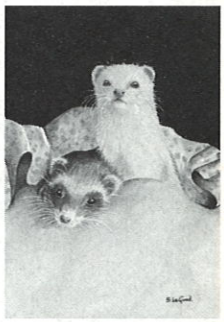

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❑ 203

❑ 204

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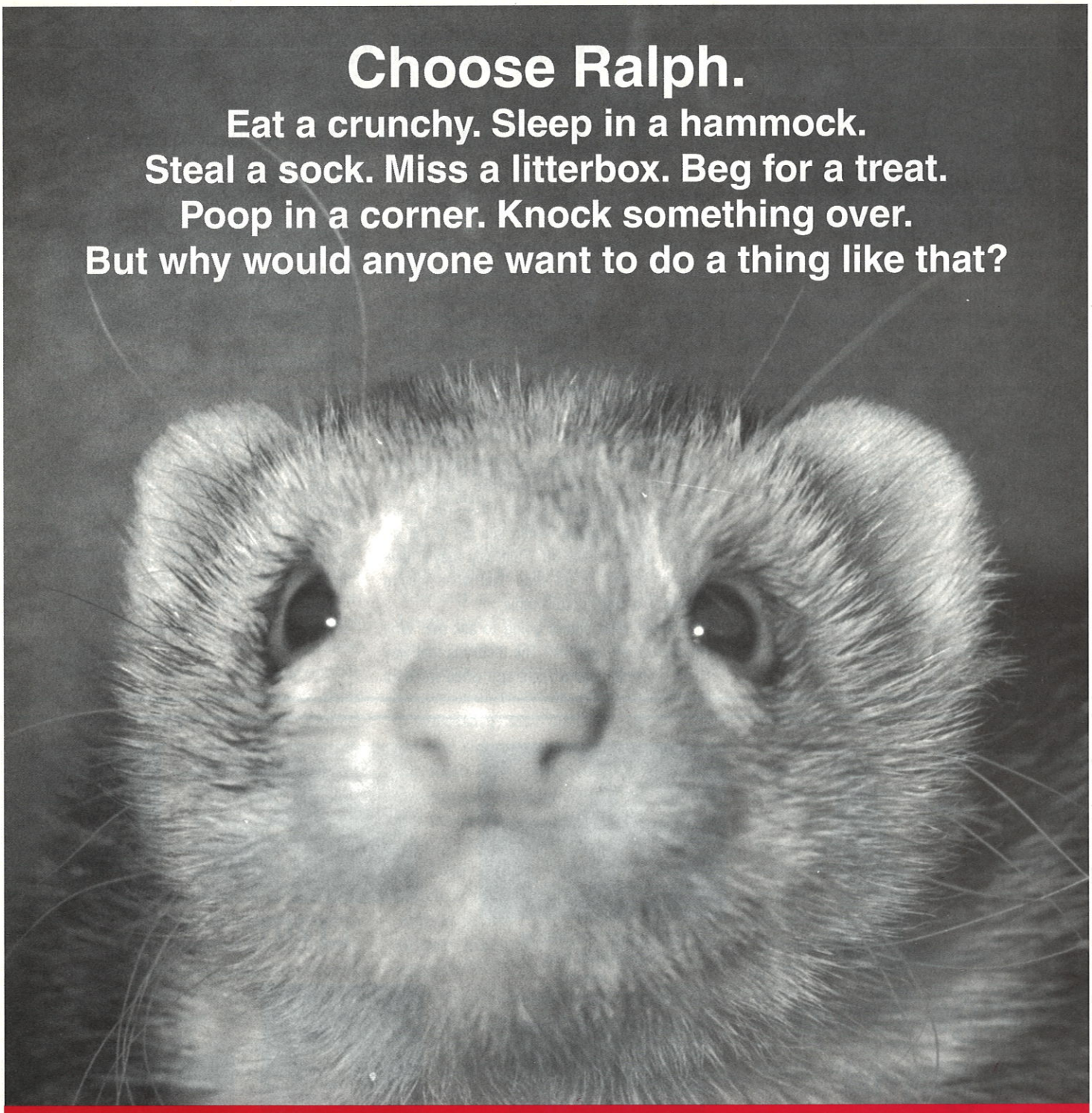
Choose Ralph.

Eat a crunchy. Sleep in a hammock.
Steal a sock. Miss a litterbox. Beg for a treat.
Poop in a corner. Knock something over.
But why would anyone want to do a thing like that?



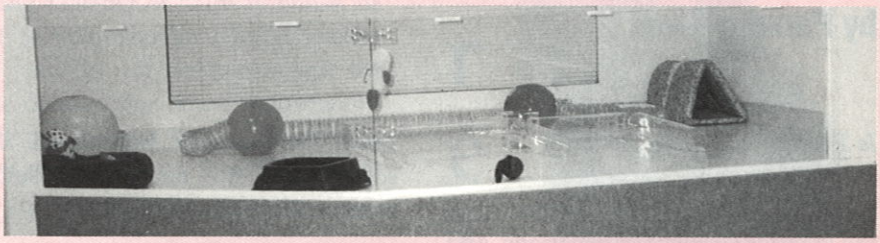
Ralphspotting

Soon to be a major motion picture?

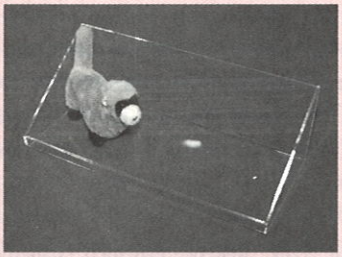
FOR FERRETS ONLY

A Whole Showroom Devoted to Ferrets!

For Ferrets Only sent us this pictorial of their new showroom. If you're in the area, do stop in!



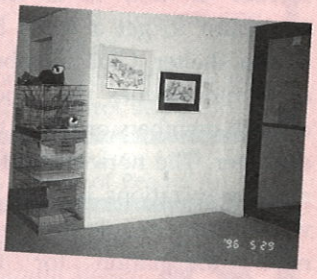
This showroom features an 8 foot by 11 foot ferret playground!



This is the Custom Commode®. Custom-sized for any cage. The Custom Commode has been used at the South Florida Ferret Shelter for 7 years. It is designed to cover two cage corners and help ferrets that have poor litterbox habits.

For Ferrets Only
12323 SW 130th St
Miami FL 33186
(305) 378-8877

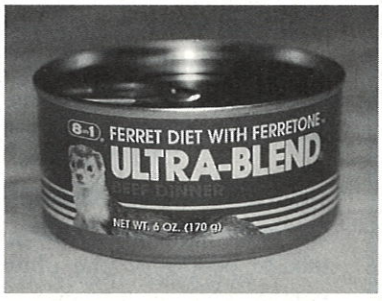
For Ferrets Only carries all sorts of cool ferret items. Gathered together by ferret folks who've taken care of hundreds of ferrets at the South Florida Ferret Shelter.



NEW PRODUCTS FOR FERRET LOVERS!

Contact: Diane Woltz
Pets International, Ltd.
2605 S. Clearbrook Drive
Arlington Heights IL 60005
(847) 956-1130

Flat-Bac water bottle fits tightly against the cage. Snap-lock bracket makes it convenient to refill. Cute little floating duck inside makes checking the water level easy.



Contact: Martin Glinsky
Eight in One Pet Products, Inc.
2100 Pacific Street
Hauppauge NY 11788
(516) 232-1200

Ultra-Blend canned food for ferrets. Comes in chicken, beef, or fish flavor. Ferretone added for palatability. Especially helpful for feeding young or sick ferrets.

Starting a Ferret Shelter

by Pamela Grant

Is There a Need for a Shelter?

Are there ferrets being turned in to the animal shelters, veterinarians, and pet shops in your area? Are they being put to sleep because of a lack of shelter space or inconvenience or due to the law? Is there a ferret club in your area? Do you know of a demand for adult ferrets as pets?

If you can answer YES to the above questions, then you might want to consider starting a Rescue, Halfway House or Ferret Shelter. Before you do:

Can You Be a Good Shelter?

Ask yourself these questions:

1. Is there a ferret club in your area that will get the word out about your rescue? If not, it is much more important to get a ferret club going than a shelter. Club members can act as a mini-rescues until the club has enough members or needs to organize a shelter. The network of ferret clubs and organizations is vital to an area where many people own ferrets. They need information for themselves before helping to find homes for unwanted ferrets. If there is not a club in your area, get one going first.

2. Is there a ferret shelter already in your area? If so, unless the shelter is constantly overloaded, don't start "competition." Ask the shelter if they need your help as a halfway house, or people power for cage cleaning days. In our case, we started out by helping a ferret halfway house, took some ferrets and found homes for them. We then took over the whole operation when the halfway house was dissolved due to house remodeling, career change, and a new baby!

3. Do any local animal shelters adopt out ferrets? If not, will they be willing to release them to your ferret rescue or to a local ferret club? The animal shelter is a small but important source of ferrets. Also, people looking to adopt ferrets will call an animal shelter for a pet, and the animal shelter needs to inform them of your rescue if they can not adopt out ferrets. Establish a good relationship with the animal shelters in your area.

4. Do you have room for a dozen or more cages? Some shelter ferrets will arrive ill, old, handicapped, or just anti-social with other ferrets. Are you willing to keep all the rejects of the ferret world, house and feed them, heal them, and take time to love them every day for the rest of their lives? Our personal collection has grown to over 20 ferrets due to our hearts being too big and having kept ferrets that have special problems or special personalities.

5. Do you have the finances to spend money where it's needed to alter ferrets, heal them, feed them, and house them? Ferrets require vaccinations (Canine Distemper at a minimum, Rabies if affordable). To keep the kit population in check, all ferrets adopted out should be altered unless adopted to established breeders.

6. Do you have plenty of free time to: clean cages, trim nails, give baths, talk to people on the phone and in person, give up evenings and weekends to show prospective adopters your ferrets, and most importantly — play with all the ferrets? Many people find it hard to believe that I work full time as well as run a rescue in my spare time. Once you get a routine down, and stick to it, the maintenance side is not too tough. I rarely get to watch a TV show all the way through in one evening without the phone ringing.

7. Do you know enough about ferrets — health, history, habits, training, etc. — to help others? Not only will you get phone calls about adoptions and drop-offs, but people will call asking questions. Examples are: Why is my ferret not eating? Why does it smell? How can I find my ferret that got outdoors? How can I teach it not to bite or to use the litter box? And so on. They might ask for veterinarian recommendations or club information as well.

If after reading this far, you feel that a ferret rescue is really what you want to do, then welcome to the minority.

Getting the Right People Involved

First, does everyone in your family agree with this idea completely? None of this, "Honey, whatever you want to do is fine with me" will fly. When you are ill with the flu and can't take care of yourself, will your spouse, kids, club members, etc. take over? If not, the smell alone of full litter boxes will drive a stuffy head out of the house. You don't dare give your germs to two dozen ferrets for fear of the vet bill.

Second, do you have a good rapport with your veterinarian? Does he/she like and know ferrets enough to see you once a week? Can you discuss a discount? Can you have him/her teach you how to give vaccinations? Will the vet be willing to discuss problems over the phone?

Third, are club members willing to help you with a shelter? Will there be weekend help for cage cleaning, people willing to help advertise for homes, and to take in a few ferrets when the shelter is full? Are there people willing to be sitters when you have to go out of town?

Fourth, have you checked local restrictions on animals and "businesses" in your neighborhood? Some neighbors might get upset with the aroma from your trash area or number of unknown cars around your house on cleaning and visiting days. Also, many jurisdictions have laws restricting a business from being operated in a private home or apartment. Since people will be coming to your home frequently, these things need to be considered for your legal well-being and for the safety of the animals.

If you have any questions about starting a shelter or halfway house, or want to volunteer at a ferret shelter near you, do not hesitate to ask for more details. For more information about the ins and outs of running a ferret shelter, or to locate someone near you to work with, contact:

STAR* Ferrets
P.O. Box 1714
Springfield, VA 22151-0714

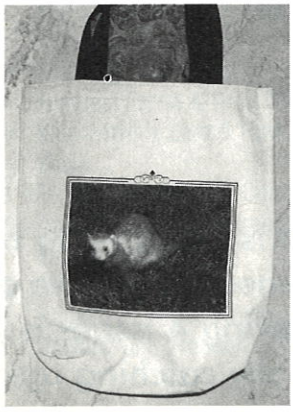
or on the Internet:
STARFeret@AOL.COM
(Note: only one "r" in Feret)

Pamela Grant is Director of Shelters That Adopt and Rescue Ferrets (STAR Ferrets).*

Moving? Moving? Moving?

Please WRITE us and let us know!

Modern Ferret
attn: Address Changes
PO Box 338
Massapequa Park NY 11762



The Critter Shoppe, Inc.

Natural duck tote bag with a color photo of our favorite ferret imprinted on one side. This versatile bag will hold your ferret supplies and still leave a little room for your own things. The bag measures 13" x 13" with a 3" bottom gusset. The price is $11.95 + $3.50 for shipping and handling. New York State residents add applicable sales tax.

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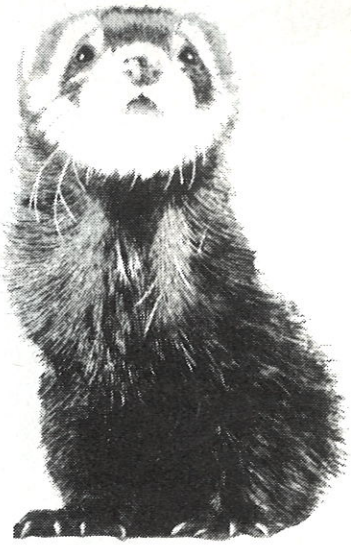
Wantagh, NY 11793

Get on our mailing list! New products coming soon!

Ferret



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Ultimate Pet T's for our ferret lovers - *and we know there are a lot of you out there!*

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PLUS, don't forget about all our other great ferret stuff, too!

Congratulations to Jane April. Last issue's winner of Reader Art.

Yes! Please send me a free Discount Master Animal Care Catalog.

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Humboldt Industrial Park
1 Maplewood Drive
Hazleton, PA 18201-9798

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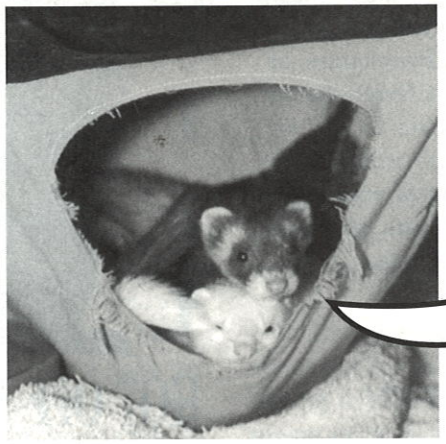
Hi! We're Modern Ferret's little girls — Sabrina and Knuks! We say you should subscribe right away! And you should send us some treats too! Okay?

There's no better way to let your ferrets know you love them than getting copies of *Modern Ferret* delivered to your door! Your ferrets will know you're keeping up on ferret care tips and medical alerts. And you'll be laughing about the antics of other people's ferrets — a sure sign you'll be more forgiving the next time they steal your wallet...

So send in your subscription today!

Sorry!
We cannot accept credit cards or phone orders! (Due to the little thieves seen above.)
Please send check or money order payable to Modern Ferret.
Thank you!

US Subscriptions:

$24.95 for six issues via third class mail

$34.95 for six issues "Plain Wrapper" via first class mail (comes in an opaque envelope with no ferret markings on the outside)

Foreign Subscriptions (in US$ drawn on a US bank only)

$34.95 for six issues to Mexico & Canada

$50.00 for six issues everywhere else

Send to:

Modern Ferret
PO Box 338
Massapequa Park NY 11762
USA

Modern Ferret is intended to be published 6 times a year. We are currently achieving 4 issues a year, but are gradually catching up!

Modern Ferret Back Issues Available

#4

48 Pages

8 Beach Party Unmasked - Interview with the makers of the *Ferrets Unmasked* video
16 Pat Wright on California Legalization
18 Tricks For Treats - Rolling Over
20 Interview with Tom & Trish Willard - makers of Totally Ferret Food
28 Why Can't We All Just Get Along? - Tips for introducing a new ferret
32 Ralph's Reviews: FerretTrail Fun-nels and *The Ferret Owners Manual*
36 The Doctor Is In #4 - Accidents Will Happen
41 Doctor to Doctor: Heartworm Disease
42 Doctor to Doctor: Bilateral Adrenal-ectomy
44 Robbin' Hood, (Paw) Prints of Thieves

#5

44 Pages

7 Legal in Massachusetts
8 Getting Rational about Rabies in Maryland
9 Ferretproofing: A Safe Home Is a Happy Home
10 Wide World of Ferrets: Japan and Australia
14 Tricks for Treats: Begging
16 The Doctor Is In #5 - The Doctor Replies
18 The Legion of Superferrets
26 Bringing in ferrets from England
30 Ralph's Reviews: Ferret Snugglies and *The Four Ferreteers* novel
31 Ralph's Health Warning
34 Modern Nutrition for Modern Ferrets
38 Doctor to Doctor: Hemolytic Anemia
40 A Ferret Tale

#6

44 Pages

7 Wide World of Ferrets: Puerto Rico
10 Finding a Lost Ferret
12 Ode(r) To a Ferret — poem
14 Tricks for Treats: Come on Command
17 The Doctor Is In #6 - Pop Medical Quiz
20 Showing Your Ferret
26 Funniest Ferret & Food Stories
30 Your Ferret's Ears & How to Clean Them
34 Ferretproofing: Your Couch
38 Doctor to Doctor: Adrenal-Associated Endocrinopathy
40 The Ferreter's Apprentice story
42 Ralph's Reviews: Things From England and Wooden Ferret

#7

52 Pages

11 Ferret Video Roundup
14 Funny Ferret Tricks
16 Our new cage!
18 Living with Insulinoma
22 Ferrets and Cats
28 Tooth Brushing
30 Tricks for Treats: Get Your Kix!
32 Seen at the H.H. Backer Pet Industry Spring Trade Show
35 Ferret Poetry
36 The Doctor Is In #7 - Toxicological Problems
38 Wide World of Ferrets: Ferreting in the UK
48 New Products!
49 Ferrets & Weddings
50 The Mystery of the Golden Sock and the Great Raisin War

YES!

These back issues of Modern Ferret are still available.

SHOW YOUR SUPPORT!

Order some of these great issues while we've still got them! You'll help support our ongoing efforts to do great stuff for ferrets AND you'll get some excellent additional reading about ferrets (and some great pictures too!).

Remember, each issue features a beautiful ferret PIN-UP CENTERFOLD!

They also contain all sorts of great stories and informative articles! So stock up today!

Copies of issues #4, 5, 6, and 7 are still available. Send $5.95 for each issue you want to:

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SPECIAL ADVERTISING SECTION

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You'll enjoy them too!

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allow 3-4 weeks for delivery

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Advertising space is extremely limited, and *Modern Ferret* reserves the right to refuse any advertising it deems improper or unfit.

Modern Ferret is available in more pet stores and book stores every day. You can help us out and your fellow ferret owners by encouraging your favorite store to carry more copies of *Modern Ferret*. That way more people will be able to find it. Thank you!

The Ferret Trading Post™ is coming soon!

Do you know what's hidden behind the couch?

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Only $24.95 for six issues!

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Contests!

Pink Noses™ PHOTO CONTEST

Your Ferret Famous

Do you have a photogenic ferret? Your ferret's photo could be on the next *Modern Ferret* trading card (or here in the magazine)! Here's how:

*All ferrets, regardless of nose color, are eligible.

*Pick out your favorite glossy finish photo(s).

*Write the following information for each photo. Your name, address, phone number, and your ferret's name. Please be careful to not damage your photo - we've had problems with ink bleeding through photos or rubbing off onto other photos.

*If there's something special about your ferret you'd like to mention, please do so!

*We regret that due to the sheer volume of photos we receive, we will no longer be able to return photos.

*Any of your photos that are published become eligible to be on trading cards or other *Modern Ferret* productions.

*By entering the contest, you grant permission to *Modern Ferret* to use the photos. Credit to the photographer is, of course, given.

SPONSORED BY:

Four Paws® Products Ltd.

FAN ART ART CONTEST

Rembrandt and Picasso may have fame, but YOU can get something they can't get — a $25 gift certificate to Discount Master! (And some fame in the ferret community.)

Break out the pencils, pens, paint, crayons, whatever! Please send us your original black and white or color pieces of ferret artwork. Any type of artwork is acceptable, as long as it features ferrets.

Contest entry grants *Modern Ferret* publication rights to the artwork. We will, unfortunately, not be able to return art submissions. If you have a special case/problem, please call us.

Please ship your art VERY carefully! Mail can sometimes be kinda' rough.

We will be running the Fan Art section in every issue of *Modern Ferret*, so keep sending in art! We'll run as many pieces as we can and the best submission from each issue will receive a $25 gift certificate from Discount Master Animal Care Catalog.

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DISCOUNT MASTER ANIMAL CARE CATALOG

Send all contest entries to:

Modern Ferret
attn: _____ Contest
PO BOX 338
Massapequa Park NY 11762

FOR MODERN FERRET SUBSCRIPTION INFORMATION SEE PAGE 42

FUNNY FERRET TRICKS

Humor Contest

Ferrets are pretty goofy creatures! Now we'd like to celebrate the ferret's comic nature with a humor contest. What lengths does your ferret go to for a treat? What funny predicaments has your ferret gotten into? You can show us by sending a photo or short story. We'll try to run as many as space permits.

*The top 5 entries received will win a Ferretude T-shirt and the best entry received will also get a $25 value of Eight in One ferret products which includes new ferret canned treats and ferret canned diet.

*Please make sure you provide the following information: Your name, address, phone number, and your ferret's name.

*We regret that due to the sheer volume of entries we receive, we will not be able to return entries.

*By entering the contest, you grant permission to *Modern Ferret* to use your submission in the magazine or related materials. In any usage, credit to the submittor will be given.

SPONSORED BY:

8 in 1 Pet

MODERN FERRET'S CONTESTS ARE SPONSORED BY OUR REGULAR ADVERTISERS - PLEASE SHOW THEM YOUR SUPPORT!

Ferret Events Calendar

This listing is updated as new/more complete information is received.

November 1996

2 — Susquehanna Valley Ferret Club show; sanctioned by League of Independent Ferret Enthusiasts (LIFE). Location: Pennsylvania. For information: 717-540-1078.

2 — Ferret Association of Connecticut show. Location: Connecticut. For information: 203-247-1275.

9 — Great Lakes Ferret Association show, "Ferret Renaissance '96." Location: Holiday Inn West, Rancine, MI. For information: 313-287-4572.

23 — American Ferret Association championship show, "Fall Harvest Expo"; sanctioned by the American Ferret Association (AFA). Location: National Guard Armory, Frederick, MD. For Information: 1-888-Ferret-1.

30–Dec. 1 — Vicki Clark's Exotics & Family Pet Showcase Exposition. Location: Fort Washington Expo Center, Fort Washington, PA. For information: 215-721-7199.

February 1997

16 — Ferret Friends of Indian River County (FFIRC) Ferret Show. Location: Florida. For information: 407-567-0994.

22 — Legion of Superferrets WA show; sanctioned by League of Independent Ferret Enthusiasts (LIFE). Location: Seattle, WA. For information: 206-838-7341.

March 1997

1 — American Ferret Association championship show, "Ferret Expo '97"; sanctioned by the American Ferret Association (AFA). Location: New Carrollton Ramada, New Carrollton, MD. For Information: 1-888-Ferret-1.

22 — Loudoun Area Ferret Fanciers (LAFF) championship show & fun match, "Ferrets On Parade '97." Location: Capitol Expo Center, Chantilly, VA. For information: 703-777-2112.

22–23 — Vicki Clark's Exotics & Family Pet Showcase Exposition. Location: Prince George's Equestrian Center Showplace Arena, Upper Marlboro, MD. For information: 215-721-7199.

April 1997

? — Ferret Association of Rhode Island (FARI), "Ferret Frolic." Location: North Kingstown, RI. For information: 401-294-6309.

26–27 — Vicki Clark's Exotics & Family Pet Showcase Exposition. Location: Fort Washington Expo Center, Fort Washington, PA. For information: 215-721-7199.

May 1997

31–June 1 — Vicki Clark's Exotics & Family Pet Showcase Exposition. Location: Agriculture Hall at Allentown Fairgrounds, Allentown, PA. For information: 215-721-7199.

June 1997

7 — Second Annual Friends & Ferrets Walk for Ferret Wise Shelter, walk-a-thon to raise funds for Ferret Wise Rescue & Rehabilitation Shelter. Location: Keene, NH. For information: Ferret Wise, PO Box 561, Marlborough, NH 03455 or 603-876-4975.

7–8 — Vicki Clark's Exotics & Family Pet Showcase Exposition. Location: NJ Convention & Expo Center at Raritan, Edison, NJ. For information: 215-721-7199.

* * *

If your club is having a show or fun match, you must get the information to *Modern Ferret* as far in advance as possible. We can no longer list shows for which we have not received information. When submitting information for a show listing, please include the following:

1. Date. 2. Club/show sponsor (e.g., Anytown Ferret Club). 3. Show title, if any (e.g., "Ferret Show #1"). 4. Sanctioning body, if any (e.g., LIFE, NAFA, AFA, FURO). 5. Place of show (city, state, hall if known). 6. Contact (can be any or all: phone/fax/address/e-mail).

Remember — ferret shows are a great opportunity to meet experienced ferret owners and ask questions!

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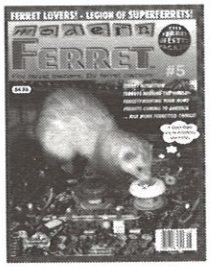

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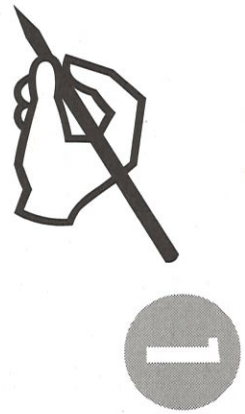

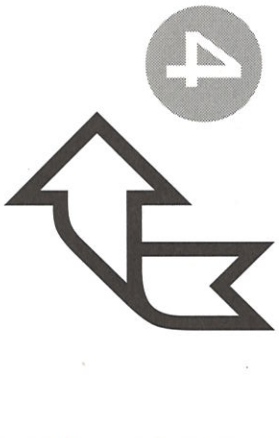

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Ralph's Reviews IN COLOR

featuring: RALPH THE INSPECTOR

The WarmFuzzy Ferret Tote
WarmFuzzy Ferret Rescue
RD 2 Box 2118, Maidencreek Rd
Fleetwood, PA 19522
Phone: (610) 926-9087
Contact: Shirley Hertzog

Bring your ferret with you in the stylish and safe Ferret Tote from WarmFuzzy Rescue. This sturdy tote comes in a wide array of fabrics and colors from casual to tres chic. The shoulder strap is adjustable, and there's even a front pocket with a Velcro closure for taking along treats (like raisins). There's a strap with a hook attached inside the tote to keep your ferret from falling out. Attach the "safety strap" hook to any harness (never a collar) that has the D-ring (where the leash hooks on) attached at the back of the harness (or you could use the WarmFuzzy harness). Great for bringing your ferret around town or around a ferret show! The tote is available in two sizes — single and double.

Ralph's Review: "This is almost like being in a box (I like sleeping in boxes). I feel very safe in here, even though there's all kinds of strange stuff out there. But this hook thing has got to go! I can't leap out onto the floor to search for toys. Mom says it's a good thing because gravity would make me hit the floor with a thud. Hmmph. Everybody knows there's no such thing as gravity."

The Bestest Ferret Litter
The Little Creature Litter Company
PO Box 497
Lake Luzerne, NY 12846
Phone: (518) 798-1104
Contact: Jack Sturgeon

The Bestest Ferret Litter is a specially treated clay litter that is low dust. It was developed for ferrets to eliminate litter box odors. The Bestest Ferret Litter neutralizes odors; it doesn't cover them up with perfumes. It lasts between two and four times longer than conventional litters. The Bestest Ferret Litter is reusable: scoop out solid waste and mix the wet litter back in with dry litter. The litter dries and continues to absorb moisture and odors — *really*. Just add new litter as needed. When the litter stops absorbing odors or moisture, change the whole litter box.

Ralph's Review: "Hey! My poop don't stink! I like that the litter box doesn't get stinky and that the litter doesn't make me or Dad sneeze (but dopey Knuks stuck her nose in it and had to have her face washed). Of course, the litter doesn't work when I poop in the corner, which makes Mom and Dad cranky. I think they should make litter that cleans up my poop wherever I decide to leave it. Now that's an idea."

You saw it here in Modern Ferret!

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Totally Ferret® provides balanced and complete nutrition for all stages (pregnancy, lactation, growth and maintenance) of a ferret's life, as determined in actual ferret feeding tests.

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Totally Ferret® is a chicken based product and contains 36% protein; 22% fat. Ferrets require a high protein, high fat animal protein based diet.

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A Ferretted Fairy-Tail™

Rudy the Red-Eyed Ferret

Story by Mary R. Shefferman

Illustrations by Linda Ozelis

On the day he was born, Rudy's Mom and Dad looked at each other and shook their heads. Rudy wasn't like the other kits in the litter. The other kits were brown and tan, but Rudy was white and had red eyes that glowed, even through his closed eyelids. Rudy was an albino. And an unusual one at that.

Rudy's family lived with several other ferret families in a town called North Powl (which is distinguished from Powl proper, where they make lawn furniture). The town was run by a very large two-legged creature that all the ferrets called Sandy Claws. No one knew why he was called that, since there was no sand in North Powl, and the creature had no claws to speak of. This Claws fellow was pretty nice. He spent most of the year making ferret toys and treats. Then, on one Very Special Night, he would fly all over the world in The Big Flying Thing and give treats and toys to all the good little ferrets (of course, all ferrets are good ferrets — little or big). The ferrets of North Powl helped Sandy make all the goodies, and then they helped test them out. Some particularly clever ferrets helped fly The Big Flying Thing that Sandy used to carry all the toys and treats on the one Very Special Night.

As the kits grew and began to open their eyes, they began to ask their Mom why Rudy's eyes were so funny looking. Rudy's Mom would tell them to hush. She'd hug Rudy tight and tell him he was a very special ferret.

While all the kits romped around playing tag and wrestling with each other, Rudy played by himself. He would push a little ball around with his little pink nose for hours. The other ferret kits were sometimes very mean to Rudy. They even called him names that weren't his!

Something quite mysterious began to happen as Rudy matured; he began to see things clearly. Most ferrets can see only a couple of feet in front of them, but Rudy could see far into the distance. It was his glowing red eyes. But the other ferrets didn't care that Rudy had special eyesight, they only cared that he looked different, and they were very cruel to him because of it.

Rudy was sad. He wanted to wrestle and romp with the other ferrets. But they would have nothing to do with him.

Now, Sandy Claws hardly missed anything that went on in North Powl (or anywhere else, for that matter). He knew about little Rudy and his glowing red eyes. He knew that the other ferrets never let poor Rudy join in the ferret games. He didn't approve of the brown ferrets' behavior, but he knew there would come a day when they would learn how important it can be to be different.

What really bothered Sandy was that Rudy thought that **he** didn't love him. While Sandy was making the toys and treats, several brown ferrets would play at his feet. Sandy could see Rudy out of the corner of his eye sadly watching them. He wanted to pick up Rudy and hug him, but that

would not teach the brown ferrets a very important lesson. The brown ferrets might tease Rudy even more. So he waited for the Very Special Night.

"I wish I looked like all the other ferrets," Rudy said to his Mom.

"But Rudy, you have lovely red eyes and you can see what others can't. You're very special," said his Mom.

"But I don't want to see good, I want to look good!" Rudy protested.

"You'll see, Rudy. Some day you'll be glad you have those wonderful red eyes," his Mom said and licked his ear.

"I guess so," said Rudy. But he really didn't believe her.

The Very Special Night that occurs once a year arrived. The weather was very bad. It was very, very hard to see. Sandy gathered together all the ferrets that help fly The Big Flying Thing and help deliver all the toys and treats to all the good little ferrets everywhere.

"I don't think we'll be able to go tonight. It's much too hard to see, and we'll surely crash," Sandy said. He looked very sad about this and the ferrets were beside themselves trying to figure out how to cheer up Mr. Claws.

"We can use a flashlight!" cried the first brown ferret.

"What about using a cane to feel out where everything is?" asked the second brown ferret.

"What if we just go tomorrow?" suggested the third brown ferret.

"Hey! What about Rudy? He can see really super-well!" said the fourth brown ferret.

"Yeah!" cried all the ferrets at once. They began chanting: "Roo-dee! Roo-dee!"

All the brown ferrets went with Sandy Claws over to Rudy's hammock and gently nudged him awake.

"Rudy," said Sandy very seriously, "will you be so kind as to use that super vision of yours to help me guide The Big Flying Thing so I can get the treats and toys to all the good little ferrets tonight?"

"Really?" asked Rudy. "You want me to help you? Why, I'd be honored!!"

Sandy and the brown ferrets, led by the guiding red eyes of Rudy, flew in The Big Flying Thing around the world giving out treats to all the good little ferrets everywhere.

The brown ferrets all came to love Rudy, even though his eyes were red. They learned that everyone is important in their own way — even funny-looking ferrets.

Glee ensued.

The End.

READER ART

The Reader Art Contest!
This issue's featured artist:
Julie Serra
of Bordeaux France

The Reader Art Contest
is sponsored by:
Discount Master
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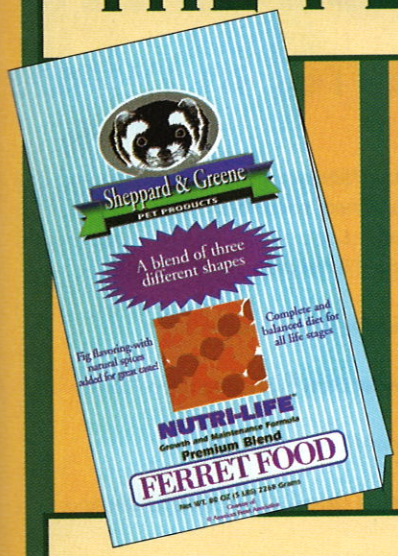
Well, what did you think of this issue? Drop us a note and let us know what you liked or disliked! We're always trying to improve!

Modern Ferret
PO Box 338
Massapequa Park NY 11762

Modern Ferret's Mission Statement

Modern Ferret is a bi-monthly color magazine for ferret owners by ferret owners. We are independent and not affiliated with any group or organization. However, we strongly encourage our readers to become involved with and support any local, regional, or national groups/rescues/shelters they choose. *Modern Ferret* promotes the positive image of domestic ferrets as pets by providing a popular forum for the discussion of ferret-related issues. Our editorial focus is the enjoyment of the ferret as a pet. We'll provide ferret-oriented entertainment such as interviews and articles about movies, tricks, photography, traveling, pet care, new products, and more. We'll also serve as a forum for presenting the latest medical information about ferrets—on both the veterinary and pet-owner levels. We'll produce quality products to further promote ferrets as enjoyable and popular pets. We hope to raise the general public's awareness and education level about ferrets as pets by providing a vibrant forum with a visual appeal. Our graphics will try to capture the fun-loving, playful nature of ferrets in every issue. ***For ferret owners. By ferret owners.***™

THE FERRET GENERAL STORE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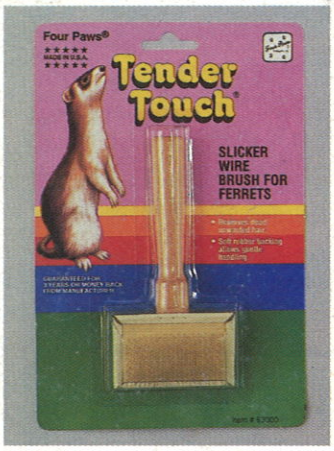

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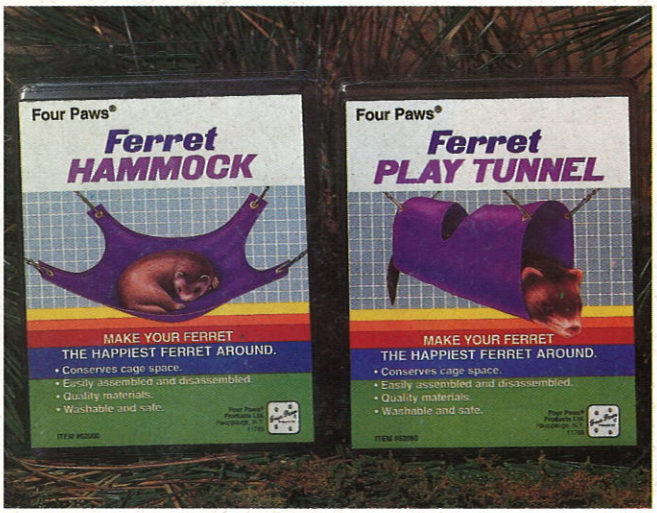

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